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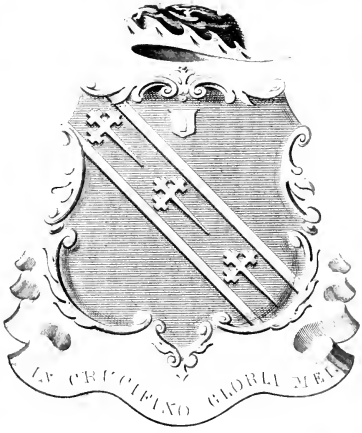

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THE

STORY

OF

LILLY DAWSON.

BY

MRS. CROWE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE ADVENTURES OF SUSAN HOPLEY," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

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LILLY DAWSON.

CHAPTER I.

AN ALARM.

Forgetting every thing she had left behind, and thinking only of the friend she was hastening to, Lilly flew along the streets, and succeeded in reaching the poor-house, just as the clock struck the quarter past nine. Abel was still in the yard; his long habit of out-door life rendering even that joyless place of exercise more agreeable to him than the interior. He had resigned all hopes of Lilly and the hawthorn for that night, and was sitting in sad solitude, ruminating on his troubles, when the bell rang.

"Father!" said she, breathless with the speed she had used, "look here!"

"Is it the hawthorn?" inquired Abel, holding out his hand to take it.

"No, it's money," answered Lilly; "I forgot the hawthorn! Feel, what a deal! They're gold, father! Ain't they worth a great deal?"

"Is it your wages?" asked Abel.

"Yes," replied Lilly; "Mrs. Ross gave them to me this morning."

"You must take care of them," returned Abel; "mind you don't lose them, Lilly. Where will you put them?"

"What would they buy?" inquired Lilly; "wouldn't they buy a basket?"

"Yes, a great many baskets; but, do you want a basket?"

"I mean for you, father; a basket such as you had before, with things in it to sell."

"But what could I do with a basket alone?" inquired Abel, whilst a flush overspread his

pale face, as he caught a glimpse of her meaning.

"Couldn't I go with you, father?" said Lilly.

"But would you, Lilly?" said Abel.

"Oh, yes," answered Lilly; "I should like it so much."

The old man's heart swelled with gratification at this proof of his *protégée's* regard and gratitude, and, for a moment, with the hope of being released from his present cheerless abode; but the latter feeling quickly subsided, and his face resumed its mournful expression, as he shook his head and said gravely, "No, Lilly, that must not be. You are in a respectable situation, and you must try and keep it. All your future welfare may depend on your remaining in Mrs. Ross's service, and conducting yourself so as to win friends. You know you have no friend in the world except me and Martha, who can be of no more use to you; and you must try and make some for yourself. Going about the country with

me was very well, when you could do nothing else—but now you can; and you must stay where you are."

Poor Lilly! If Abel could have seen her face, he would have had some idea of the amount of disappointment he was inflicting; but, as he could not, he had no conception of it; for Lilly, who had been trained to an unreasoning obedience, never disputed any body's commands; still less his, whom she had every disposition to obey. She only stood silently beside him, with her features and form relaxed from the tension of elated hope; whilst he, never dreaming how much her heart was set upon the project, or, indeed, that it was set upon it at all, and believing that in doing his duty towards her there was no sacrifice but his own, advisedly changed the subject, and reverted to the hawthorn, in order to curtail the pang that the conscientious extinction of this glimmer of hope was costing him.

"Bring it the next time you come, Lilly, will you?" said he.

"Yes," answered Lilly faintly.

"And be sure you take care of that money. I think it would have been better to have left it with your mistress. You don't want it; do you?"

"No," replied Lilly, speaking more firmly; for the question was quite pertinent to her thoughts. She felt very clearly that she did not want it now.

"Then give it her, my child; and ask her to keep it for you."

"They're going to shut the gates," said Lilly.

"Then you must go," said Abel.

"Good night," said Lilly.

"Good night, my child! aud don't forget the hawthorn," said Abel, as she slowly moved towards the gate she had a few minutes before entered with so much alacrity.

"There, off with you! Move a little

quicker, will you?" said the man who was waiting to close them; and, in a moment more Lilly was in the street.

She walked slowly on, unconsciously retracing her steps towards Mrs. Ross's, too suddenly let down from her exaltation to have yet recovered the fall or her own recollection. The possibility of Abel's declining her proposal had never occurred to her, nor had she any appreciation of the motives that led to the refusal. Oppression with her had begun at so early an age, and been so unremittingly exercised, as to nearly extinguish desire; or, if she had ever wished for anything, it was for the recurrence of Sunday, when her cousins would be out, and she would have rest. She had, therefore, had no temptation to rebellion, having no will of her own to oppose to that of others. Since her emancipation, all her wishes had centred in Abel; and, as her ideas of duty and respectability were as yet in a very rudimentary state, she

could not conceive any reason why both he and she should remain unhappy, when they had the means of being otherwise. It is true, that she had much improved under Abel's society and tuition; but it was not so much her understanding as her feelings that had been cultivated; though, doubtless, the exercise of the last had not been without its effect on the first. Still, she was a mere child, though she was sixteen years old; and she was nearly as ignorant of duties and conventionalities as if she were only sixteen months. Even Abel himself was by no means acquainted with the extent of this ignorance. She had always complied with his wishes and intentions; she had shown herself active, obliging, and useful, at Martha Lintock's; and she had given satisfaction by the regular observance of her routine of duties at Mrs. Ross's. But, in the two first instances, her affection for him had been her prompter; and, in the last, the motive was little different. He had

wished her to accept Mrs. Ross's proposal; and, as she could not remain with him, she had no motive for objecting; whilst her naturally good disposition and early habits of obedience led her to do what was required of her whilst she was there. But, as soon as the prospect of something she would like much better was opened to her, being neither under the dominion of fear, as formerly, nor conscious of having undertaken a duty, or of being a party to an agreement, she had dropped her chain, and joyously set herself free, without hesitation or remorse.

But now that Abel had so briefly and decidedly awakened her from her dream, there was a complete re-action. The strings of the harp were all relaxed—her step was languid, her spirits depressed, her mind confused, by the blow that had extinguished her hopes; and it was only instinctively that she kept her way towards her home; nor was it till she arrived within sight of the house, that the

idea of what she had done, and of Mrs. Janet's displeasure, presented themselves to her in any thing like their true colours. There was the wicket she had climbed over; beyond it was the back door of the house; and, although it was eleven o'clock, the family were not gone to bed, for there was a light in the pantry window. But Lilly felt herself quite unable to encounter Mrs. Janet's surprise and wrath; and she stood hesitating what she should do, till she saw the shadow of John the footman against the blind; and presently afterwards the light in the pantry was extinguished; by which she understood that all the servants had retired to their beds.

What was to be done now? It was nearly midnight, and there was Lilly standing at a garden-gate in the outskirts of the town, without an idea of where or how she should pass the remaining hours till morning. Martha, her only friend, lived not far from the poor-house. She might certainly find her way

thither; but Martha would be in bed, too; and Lilly's timidity and depression quite unfitted her for such an enterprise as first disturbing her friend, and then explaining the cause of her doing so. Besides, from what Abel had said, she had become aware that her abandonment of Mrs. Ross's service would grieve, if not incense them; and she felt afraid to meet them, not because she was conscious of having done wrong, but because she could not bear the pain of their displeasure. In short, with the best intentions in the world, Lilly had got into a terrible scrape; what she was to do next she could not imagine; and, for want of being able to make up her mind on the subject, she remained where she was, leaning against the little garden-gate, and expiating her mistake by showers of tears.

By and by, she heard the distant church clocks strike the hour of one; and, just as they had ceased, she distinguished the sound

of footsteps and voices approaching. Mr. Ross's house, as we have said, was on the outskirts of the town; it was, in fact, situated in a suburb, on the London road, amongst other villas of the opulent gentry. The persons approaching were coming towards the town, and as the hum of the population had ceased, and the night was extremely calm, their voices reached Lilly from a considerable distance. That she should be alarmed was natural. Every woman has an instinctive dread of encountering strange men in lonely places; and, without a moment's reflection, she followed her first impulse, which was, to jump over the gate and conceal herself under the hedge, which extended on each side of it.

Meantime, the travellers drew nearer and nearer; and as, from the lateness of the hour, they probably considered themselves quite secure from being overheard, they did not stint their voices. The first sentence, however, that distinctly reached Lilly's ears, was uttered

by one exceedingly familiar to her; it was no other than Giles Lintock's.

"It's the next house we come to," said he.

"They seem fine buildings," observed his companion.

"Very," returned Giles; "they all belong to rich people. This Ross, I suppose," and, as he said this, the two men drew up at the little wicket, standing with their arms resting on it, exactly where Lilly had stood a few minutes before, "isn't worth less than fifty thousand pounds. He has the best business of any man about this part of the country."

"And it's here she lives?" said the other.

"Yes," replied Giles: "they've got several children, and she's under nursery-maid. But, I say, will she go with you for asking?" added he. "You know I can't answer for that. What I undertook was, to bring you to her—and that I've done; at

least, I will do it to-morrow, or when you please; and then I'm entitled to the five pounds. But, if you don't take care, Mr. Ross will be inquiring into what right you have to claim her—that is, if she disputes it—and I doubt whether your being her cousin gives you any legal right over her person; unless you can prove you are also her guardian!"

"I am aware of all that," returned the other; "but I don't think she'd dispute my will, if I was face to face with her—she'd better not."

"Perhaps not, if she'd nobody to back her," answered Giles; "but, with Mr. and Mrs. Ross at her shoulder, it may be very different."

"I suppose she comes out alone sometimes," said the other.

"No doubt of it," replied Giles. "She comes to my wife's — I've seen her there. You might nab her then, and nobody a bit the wiser."

"With your help," returned the stranger.

"You shall have that," answered Giles.

"How late does she stay out?—do you know?" inquired the other.

"Probably, ten o'clock; it's the usual time servants have hereabout."

"If the nights were darker," said the stranger, looking up at the sky, "it would be easy enough, along this road."

"Not so easy, if she made any resistance," replied Giles. "There are always people walking about here on a fine night, especially Sundays, when she's most likely to be out alone. Besides, the footmen stand lounging at the gates, looking about them, and gallanting with the maids next door, as late as eleven o'clock, very often."

"Humph!" said the stranger, as if cogitating on this information; "couldn't you get your wife to send for her some evening, and then offer to walk back with her?"

"I might perhaps," replied Giles; "but

my wife and I don't draw very well together. I don't know whether she'd do it for me, unless I could give her some good reason for it."

"We may think of a reason," returned the stranger. "The thing is to get her away from this house—the rest is easy enough."

"We must talk it over to-morrow," said the other, moving from the gate.

"What's the name of this place?" inquired the stranger, following Giles.

"It's called Cardigan Terrace, and Mr. Ross's is No. 5," were the last words that reached Lilly's ears, as the two men walked away towards the town.

Poor Lilly! Here was the verification of the old adage again, "that misfortunes never come singly." The stranger was no other than Luke Littenhaus, who, in consequence of the answer to his advertisement, had followed her track; whilst Giles, neither knowing nor caring anything about their relative situations, nor Lilly's motive for abandoning

her relations, was quite willing for so handsome a remuneration as five pounds, to facilitate the stranger's recovery of his captive.

At the same time, all he cared about was the promised reward; and he privately entertained considerable doubts of Luke's effecting his object. First of all, he would have to prove what claim he had to her; and, with so powerful a defender as Mr. Ross, it was not likely he could establish any that would entitle him to carry her off, against her will. But this was nothing to him; nor did he intend to endanger his own safety by aiding his new acquaintance in any perilous enterprise. Anything he could do to serve him in the way of quiet stratagem, he had no objection to; whilst, in the mean time, he had so worded his bargain, that as soon as he had actually brought Luke and the young girl face to face, he was entitled to the recompence; and of doing this, he entertained not the most distant doubt. How should he,

when he had left Lilly a few weeks before, quietly ensconced in so excellent a situation as Mrs. Ross's, and was aware that only six months of the year for which she had been engaged had yet expired?

CHAPTER II.

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY.

We will not attempt to depict poor Lilly's terror and amazement, whilst, crouching beneath the hedge within three yards of the speakers, afraid to breathe lest they should discover her, she listened to this conversation. She was actually paralyzed with fear; and, for some time after they had passed on, she remained as motionless as if she had been turned into stone. It was not till the echo of their voices had long died away, that she ventured to creep out of her hiding-place, and take a side peep at the gate, where she almost feared she should still see them standing. But the faint beams of the waning moon showing her that there was no one there, she ventured, with as little noise as possible, to

rise to her feet; and, after cautiously listening, for the purpose of making sure that her enemies were not returning, she climbed over the wicket again into the road.

Had Lilly not been a child in understanding and experience, there would have been nothing easier now than to have escaped all her difficulties. If she could have summoned courage to have presented herself before Mrs. Ross, and explained the motives that had led to her offence, and the danger that was impending over her, she would have probably found both pardon and protection; but this she did not know. She could not imagine, that after going away in the manner she had done and staying out all night, she could ever be forgiven or admitted into the house again; and she had no conception that Mr. and Mrs. Ross either would or could have defended her against those to whom she imagined she belonged. Added to which, an instinctive feeling, derived from the past,

vague and undefined as her notions had been as to the real interpretation of what she had witnessed at the Huntsman, made her look upon Luke with the same sentiment that a child might look upon an ogre. An undefinable terror of something—she knew not what—pervaded her at the idea of falling into his hands; and she had his own word for it, that he would scruple at no means that might serve to entrap her. All she thought of, therefore, was immediate escape; and, without considering where she was to go, or reflecting on the probable consequences of so rash a proceeding as setting out alone, in the middle of the night, on a journey, which might conduct her to greater perils than those she was flying from, she took to her heels and ran along the road in an opposite direction to the town, till she was fairly out of breath, and obliged to relax her speed for want of it.

With the slower pace came something like reflection; and, though urged forwards by the

eager desire to get out of the reach of those she feared might pursue her, she did now begin to wonder whither she was going, and what was to become of her. But, unable to form any reasonable plan of escape, and afraid to return, she still walked on; with her heart yearning towards Abel, her only friend, to whom she would have given the world to explain her dilemma; though not without some fears of his displeasure, too; for she was sure he would be very sorry, if not very angry with her, for the imprudence which had lost her so excellent a situation.

The night was very fine, and it was not long before the forlorn traveller was cheered by the dawn of morning, and then she could venture to sit down by the wayside to take a little rest. But the voices of some men approaching started her to her feet; for she could not divest herself of the apprehension of being pursued, and she fled forwards again with somewhat of her former speed, till she

reached a village; and, as she was very hungry and had plenty of money in her pocket, she would have very gladly purchased some food; but the shops were not yet opened; and, afraid to linger, she walked through. And now the early travellers and the labourers in the fields began to be afoot, and ever and anon she was saluted by the observation that it was a fine morning, or with a rustic compliment upon her early rising; and thus she proceeded without any particular adventure, till, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, she seated herself on a low stone post, which stood at the gate of a neat little villa, enclosed in a garden.

She had sat there about half an hour, with somewhat of the feelings of a hunted hare, alarmed at every foot she heard approaching from the west, and so confused and perplexed with the strangeness of her situation, that she was entirely incapable of determining on any step that might diminish her difficulties, when

she heard, first, the door of the house, and, next, the gate unlocked behind her; and presently a man came out, bearing in his hand a small trunk and a large blue bandbox, which he set down on the pathway, and then retreated into the house, leaving the gate ajar. On the trunk were the letters A. T. in brass nails, and on the bandbox was inscribed "Mrs. Treadgold, passenger."

Presently the man came out again and looked down the road, as if expecting something. Then he looked at Lilly, and seemed about to address her; when a voice within, calling "James," caused him suddenly to reenter the gate.

A third time he made his appearance; and now, after listening for a moment, Lilly heard him say, "I think she's coming now!" and then, turning towards her, where she was still sitting on the post, he added, "You're waiting for her too, I suppose?"

"Sir!" said Lilly, not understanding what he meant.

"James!" cried a voice from within, "isn't that the coach?"

"Yes, ma'am, she's coming up now," answered James, re-entering the gate; out of which he presently issued again, accompanied by a lady; upon whose appearance Lilly rose from her seat, and at the same moment the coach swept round a curve in the road, and dashed up to the gate. In a moment, the coachman was off his box, arranging the luggage in the boot, whilst James opened the coach-door and handed in the lady.

"Now, my dear," said the coachman, taking hold of Lilly's arm, and drawing her to the coach. "Come, come, don't be frightened—put your foot there—the other there—that's right!" and, before she knew where she was, between the driver on one side, and James on the other, Lilly found herself at the top of the London coach, spanking away at the rate of ten miles an hour.

The truth was, that the coachman, seeing a

respectable looking servant-girl standing with the lady, set her down at once for the maid; whilst James had taken it for granted she was there waiting for the coach. The mistake was not unnatural in either party, for Lilly was very well dressed, with a neat bonnet and shawl, and a gown that had formerly been worn by Mrs. Ross herself. For, as the under nursery-maid had to walk out with the children, that lady had recruited her wardrobe with various articles from her own. The strangest feature in the affair was Lilly's consenting to mount the coach, without any attempt at an explanation; but this arose, in some degree, from the suddenness of the thing, which gave no time for so timid and inexperienced a person to collect her wits, till she was actually hoisted up; and by that time a vague notion, that since she was flying in that direction, riding was both a more speedy and a more agreeable way of attaining her object than walking, prompted

her to submit in silence to what fate seemed to have ordained for her.

There is something very exhilarating in dashing along with four horses, whilst the free air is blowing in your face; and Lilly was by no means insensible to so novel a pleasure. At eight o'clock they stopped to breakfast, and then, having done ample justice to the ham and toast, she presented one of her guineas in payment, and received nineteen shillings in change, which seemed to her to be worth more than the gold that she had given.

When people start on a journey at four o'clock in the morning, they are seldom very communicative till they have had their breakfast; and, accordingly, everybody on the outside of the coach had hitherto possessed their souls in silence. But now, warmed by the tea and comforted by the toast, there seemed a general disposition to talk; with the exception of Lilly, whose early habits of

enforced silence still clung to her; and her next neighbour, who was the only person of, apparently, a similar grade to herself on the coach. This was a pale, thin, somewhat sickly-looking woman, with a baby in her arms, that, by its whining and crying, seemed to be suffering from its teeth, or some other infantile malady. The mother wore a dress of black stuff, a shawl of the same colour, a white straw bonnet, a good deal the worse for wear, tied down with a single bit of black ribbon, and a pair of black cotton gloves. She had altogether the look of respectable poverty; and a life of sorrow, suffering, and trial, had left its records engraven on her face. She sat behind the coach, with her back to the horses, as did Lilly; and the latter had observed that she had not made her appearance in the breakfast-room, with the rest of the passengers. When they returned to the coach, she had found her eating a biscuit, a bit of which she now and then drew

from her pocket for the child, whose uneasiness was temporarily allayed by sucking it.

On the other side of this poor traveller, who occupied the centre seat, was a well enough dressed, but coarse-looking, and very coarsely-mannered man, who, from his conversation with a gentleman in a white hat and green shooting-coat, opposite him, appeared to be a stable-keeper. This personage was by no means an agreeable neighbour. He had taken a dram where they stopped to change horses, before breakfast, and another as soon as he had swallowed his meal; and, from the manner in which she turned away her head, the fumes of the liquor seemed to be annoying the sickly woman; but, by and by, when he took out a short pipe and began to smoke, without any regard to the convenience of those about him, she became positively ill; and was under the necessity of asking Lilly if she would hold the child for her, for a minute or two. Lilly took the

child willingly, and nursed it as well as she could; and when the mother, on feeling somewhat recovered, offered to take it again, she expressed her readiness to keep it longer.

"It doesn't tire me," said she. "I can hold him very well."

"He's teething, poor little fellow," said the mother, "and it makes him so restless that I don't get any sleep o' nights with him, and that keeps me ill all day; for I'm not overly strong, at the best."

This commencement naturally leading to further communication, the stranger asked Lilly if she were going all the way to London; and Lilly, who did not know where she was going, answered that she believed she was.

"I have been down to the country," said the stranger, "seeing about my husband's brother, as is just dead, though it was very inconvenient to me to travel with a young child, and he sickly too, and not very well myself: but Mr.

Watts—that's my husband—couldn't leave his work, so I'd need to go, whether or not." Here she sighed as if the results of the journey had not made her amends for its fatigues. "Travelling by coach is very expensive too," she added. "I've paid sixteen shillings for my place to London, and as much when I came down—that's one pound twelve shillings, which is a great deal for a poor person;" and here another sigh furnished the commentary to the text.

"How much shall I have to pay?" inquired Lilly.

"About fourteen shillings, I should think, from the place you got up," answered Mrs. Watts. "But your missus pays for you, I suppose?"

"No," said Lilly, looking at her with some surprise; and wondering how she knew any thing about her mistress.

"Then she gives you the money to pay, yourself; that's the same," said Mrs. Watts;

and as this was an axiom that Lilly could not dispute, she made no answer.

"My husband had a cousin lived in your family," continued Mrs. Watts—"he comes from this part of the country—it's a very good family to live in, isn't it?"

"Yes, very," answered Lilly, not a little frightened at this unexpected recognition.

"I know who Mrs. Treadgold was too, afore she married Mr. Treadgold," added Mrs. Watts.

"That's she inside the coach;" said Lilly, still not comprehending the *qui pro quo;* "she's got her name upon her box."

"Oh, yes, I know her very well," said the other. "She was a Miss Allison—there was two of 'em—and this here one was the handsomest, and married Mr. Treadgold, and the other married Mr. Knox, and she keeps a milliner's shop, in Oxford Street; and Mrs. Treadgold goes up once a year to see her. Tom Watts—that's my husband's cousin—

knew well enough where she went, though she always gave out something different, and that's where she's going now, no doubt. But she was never used to take a maid, and I wonder she does now."

"I don't think she has any maid," returned Lilly. "I didn't see one."

"I thought you were her maid," said Mrs. Watts, looking round with some surprise.

"No," answered Lilly.

"But you're with her, ar'n't you? You came to the coach with her?"

"No," said Lilly; "I was only sitting there to rest."

"Oh," said Mrs. Watts, still not suspecting Lilly's involuntary Hegira, "then you live somewhere near there, I suppose?"

"Not very near," returned Lilly. "I had walked a great way."

As this last piece of information suggested no new question, the conversation rested there for some time; and presently after this, they stopped to change horses.

"That has been a fine horse in his day," remarked the gentleman in the green shooting-coat to him of the pipe; as the ostler led out the beautiful remains of a bright bay hunter.

"Ay, sir," returned the other; "I know him well; he's been a famous un in his time. I sold him myself five years ago to General Markham. He was then just rising four."

"He's been terribly hard run," observed the gentleman whose name was Thornley.

"Yes," said Elliott, the stable-keeper. "The General's a bad horse-master; he'll run any horse off his legs in five years."

"He lives somewhere hereabouts, doesn't he?" said Mr. Thornley.

"We've passed his place some time back," replied Elliott. "He owns a great deal of land about Weldon; and has a deal of property one way or t'other."

"Is he married?" inquired Thornley.

"Yes, he is, worse luck for him," returned

Elliott. "He married out of spite, and a bad business he made of it."

"How so?" inquired Mr. Thornley.

"Why, you see, sir," said Elliott, "he was the son of old Markham, the rich East Indian."

"I remember," said Thornley; "he left an immense fortune."

"Yes, sir, and he left it all betwixt this here General Markham — he was Colonel Markham then—and his daughter; they was his only children—he never had but them two."

"She's dead, I think," said Mr. Thornley; "a brother of mine met her in Calcutta, and used to speak of her as a very sweet creature."

"I believe she was, sir; I've heard say so. Well, sir, you see, by the old nabob's will, if she died unmarried, her share of the fortune was to go to her brother and his heirs; and wice wersa; if he died unmarried, his share went to her. Well, you see, nat'ral enough,

he wished to keep the girl single; but she wasn't by no means o' the same mind; and what does she do, but falls in love with a Captain in a marching regiment — Charlie Adams, he was called—an uncommon fine young fellow! We sold him the first horse he ever owned—it was a roan mare, nearly fourteen hands, and a capital one to go—she won him several handicaps before he went to India; then he sold her to Colonel Gordon; and what came of her after, I don't know."

"And Miss Markham married Captain Adams, didn't she?" said Mr. Thornley, more interested in the biography of the Markham family than in that of the roan mare.

"Yes, sir; she married him, worse luck for her; before she was of age too, and against her brother's consent."

"Was the marriage an unfortunate one, then? Didn't they agree, she and Adams?"

"I believe they agreed well enough, sir; but you see, her brother, who was disap-

pointed—for she was but a delicate creatur, and I suppose he was in hopes she'd die and leave all the fortune to him—did every thing he could to cross 'em, and kept 'em as poor as he could."

"But he couldn't keep her fortune from her," said Mr. Thornley.

"Well, even there, luck was against 'em. You see they'd a child, a boy I believe it was —no, by the by, now I think of it, it was a girl—well, sir, they doted upon the child, and they were very unwilling to take it to India with 'em, when they were ordered out there; but it seems they'd nobody to leave it with, it being but an infant; so they took it. However, they intended to come home as soon as she —that's Mrs. Adams—was of age and got her fortune; but by that time her husband, Charlie Adams, had got to be a Major; and he didn't like leaving the service; so, instead of coming themselves, they sent home the child under the care of a relation; but the ship they came

in was lost in the channel, and every soul on board perished."

"Then did the fortune revert to the brother?"

"No, sir; it should have gone to the husband by rights; for whether the old nabob meant it, or not, isn't clear; but the will ran so, that in default of heirs, the money went to her husband."

"And didn't he get it?"

"He has never got sixpence of it, sir, though it's now, I dare say, a dozen or fourteen years since the loss of the Hastings—that's the ship the child was sent home in—and, I believe, the mother did not long survive the news. She died of a broken heart, they say, at the loss of her child."

"But how could Major Adams be kept out of it?"

"Why, sir, if the lawyers are backed by a long purse, it's my belief they can keep any body out of any thing."

"But on what plea do they keep him out?" inquired Thornley.

"Why, sir, the General first disputed the will. He declared it never was the nabob's intention that the money should go out of the family—perhaps it wasn't; however, the will ran so; and Charlie Adams won that suit against him. But now he disputes the death of the child—which he says can't be proved; and as he's got plenty of money, and Colonel Adams, for he's a Colonel now, spent all he had in the first suit, he can't make no head against this one."

"I see," said Mr. Thornley; "though the General can't get the money himself, he can keep the other out of it."

"Exactly so, sir; and I believe the Colonel —that's Colonel Adams, I mean—is but badly off for want of it. The more so, as he married again about a year after the death of his first wife."

"And had his second wife no fortune?" inquired Thornley.

"Not a rap, sir, as far as I know; she was the daughter of a brother officer of the Captain's, I believe; a beautiful creature, but no money."

"And are there any children by this second marriage?" asked the other.

"One son, a fine lad about eight years old; and I don't think they've got much besides the Colonel's half-pay for the three to live on; for, when he found the first suit was to be decided in his favour, he left the regiment and came home."

"It's a great pity that the law can be made such a weapon for envy and malice!" said Mr. Thornley. "But who did the General marry himself?"

"Why, sir, he was in such a hurry to get a wife when he found his sister was resolved to marry Charlie Adams, for fear he might die himself and leave his fortune behind him

for them to enjoy, that he never stopped to look before he leaped, but married his own dairy-maid! An uncommon fine girl to look at, as you'd wish to see, but...." and here Mr. Elliott nodded his head in a manner that implied nothing very complimentary to the character of the General's ménage.

"She makes him pay for his folly, I suppose?"

"I fancy she does, sir. You saw that lady as breakfasted with us—she we took up at the *w*illa this morning—her husband is the General's agent, and manages his estates for him—and they say he's obliged to manage the wife too; for though everybody's afraid of the General, the General's afraid of his own wife—at least, so folks says."

"Well, I don't pity him," said Mr. Thornley.

"Few people does, I believe, sir," returned Elliott.

CHAPTER III.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

It seemed a pity, as far as Lilly was concerned, that the journey to London should have ever come to a termination ; at least, as long as she had money enough to pay her fare and her score at the several inns where they might stop to breakfast, dine, and sup. She had never had experience of any thing so agreeable as this careering through the air, for the sheer purpose of getting an appetite, which she had an opportunity of luxuriously satisfying exactly at the proper intervals. Could she have refrained from wondering what was to become of her when the coach stopped for good and all, she would have been in a state of real beatitude.

But even this anxiety did not oppress her as it would one who knew mankind and the world better. She did not, in short, sufficiently comprehend the peculiarities of her own situation to be very unhappy; and out of the hundred and one dangers that necessarily environed her, she saw but one, and that was the pursuit of Luke Littenhaus, from whom every mile was farther removing her.

"Is this London?" inquired Lilly, for the third time, as they drove through Kensington.

"No; but we're close to it now," answered Mrs. Watts. "I suppose you'll have somebody waiting for you at the Coach Office?"

"No," replied Lilly; "I don't know anybody in London."

"How will you do then?" naturally inquired her new acquaintance.

"I don't know," said Lilly.

"Perhaps you've got a letter to somebody that will look to you?" said Mrs. Watts.

"No, I haven't," replied Lilly.

"My goodness!" exclaimed the other. "What makes you go to London, then?"

This was a question more easily asked than answered. Lilly blushed, and, not knowing how to explain her situation, remained silent; and the suspicion that she was a fugitive naturally suggested itself to her companion. But a fugitive from what cause? She appeared to have plenty of money—for, whenever the passengers descended to take refreshment, she had accompanied them; where they dined, she had paid her fare; and she had once drawn a guinea from her pocket for the purpose of amusing the child. It was not easy to avoid some suspicion of a person so oddly situated. Had she robbed somebody, and was escaping from justice? or, was she a girl of bad character, going to ply her evil trade in London? But so quiet, so humble, so apparently simple and inexperienced a creature surely could not be the last! The first supposition seemed the most probable, for very simple-

looking girls are sometimes found guilty in this kind.

Nevertheless, an interest, compounded partly of curiosity and partly of good-nature, urged Mrs. Watts to further inquiries, which she could put without any danger of being overheard, as they sat side by side, and the rattle of the wheels drowned their voices.

"But where do you mean to go to sleep?" she asked, resuming the inquiry.

"I don't know," replied Lilly. "Do you know any place?"

"People don't like to take in strangers at this time of the night—that's *respectable* people don't," said Mrs. Watts, with an emphasis on the word *respectable;* a piece of intelligence that Lilly thought must be erroneous; since, when she travelled with Abel, they had never experienced any difficulties of that nature. "And you wouldn't like to go to any place that isn't respectable, I suppose?" continued Mrs. Watts, by way of sounding her.

"No," said Lilly, "I should be afraid;" for in the course of their travels such resorts had been pointed out to her by Abel, with remarks on their insecurity.

"And if you have much money you'll be very like to be robbed," said Mrs. Watts.

"Shall I?" said Lilly, beginning to be alarmed—for her day's adventures had taught her the value of her money.

"London's full of thieves," said Mrs. Watts.

"Is it?" said Lilly, looking somewhat amazed.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Watts; "they just lie in wait for country people, and if you don't take care, they'll be sure to strip you of every thing you've got."

"What shall I do with it?" said Lilly, pulling out of her pocket the piece of brown paper which contained her fortune; at that moment consisting of one guinea in gold, and the greatest part of another in silver.

"I can't tell," replied Mrs. Watts. "How much have you got?"

"Here's a guinea, and all this silver—I think its eighteen shillings," said Lilly, innocently laying open her store to the stranger's inspection.

"She can't be a thief," thought Mrs. Watts. "I've half a mind to ask her how she got it," a question which Lilly's simplicity rendered less difficult than might be imagined; so she put it.

"It's my wages for half a year," said she. "There were three guineas, but I changed two to pay the coachman and the dinner."

"Perhaps you're going to London to try to get a situation?" said Mrs. Watts, very much disposed to believe what she had told her.

"I should be very glad to get one," answered Lilly.

"But you'll want a character from your last place," said Mrs. Watts.

Here Lilly's blushes betrayed her again.

"Won't they give you a character?" asked Mrs. Watts.

"I don't know," murmured Lilly, looking very much ashamed, for now for the first time in her life she began to feel the importance of what she had so thoughtlessly flung away, and the inevitable disgrace and mortification of wanting it.

"Were you sent away for anything?" said Mrs. Watts.

"No, I wasn't sent away," replied Lilly; "but I went out without leave."

"And they wouldn't take you back again?"

"I don't know—I didn't try," answered Lilly.

"Did they ill-treat you, then? Didn't you like your place?"

"I liked it well enough," answered Lilly; "but I went to see somebody, and when I came back it was so late; and I was afraid the head-nurse would be very angry and tell Mrs. Ross about my going out without leave."

"But what made you come off to London? Hadn't you any friends to go to?"

"No," said Lilly. "I've only two friends, and one's in the workhouse, and the other's very poor, and her husband wouldn't let me stay there." And this was true; for Giles, little dreaming what a prize he was chasing away, had formerly objected to Martha's sheltering Lilly under her roof.

"But what made you come to London?" finally inquired Mrs. Watts; and then, for the first time, she discovered that Lilly's expedition, at least as far as the coach was concerned, was altogether involuntary.

"My goodness! I never heard of such a thing!" exclaimed Mrs. Watts; and well she might be astonished, since the real cause of Lilly's flight was yet a secret to her, and the ostensible one seemed a very inadequate motive for encountering such a "storm of fortune." But Lilly's dread of Luke was so great, that she would have found it difficult even to men-

tion his name, much less tell the history of his persecution. Besides, as, in spite of what Abel had said to her on the subject, she could not divest her mind of the idea that her cousins could and would claim her if they knew where she was, and force her to return to them, an instinctive caution closed her lips.

"I can't think what you're to do!" continued Mrs. Watts, staring at her, and wondering whether she was mad or foolish; "and you don't know Mrs. Treadgold?" for she still supposed that Lilly had not been far from her home when the coachman had caught her up and carried her off; "else she might help you."

"No, I never saw her before," said Lilly, getting very much alarmed from seeing the impression her situation made on her companion; and as she began to cry, the attention of the passengers near her was attracted, and the gentleman in the green coat inquired what was the matter. Lilly was silent, but Mrs. Watts said that the young girl had foolishly

left her place in the country, and was going to London without any acquaintance there to help her.

"Why don't she go back again to her friends, then?" said Mr. Thornley.

"Very true, sir," said Elliott; "why don't she go back again? We have passed half-a-dozen coaches going down, that would have taken her, and thank ye." But as, though they pressed Lilly with this question, she did not choose to give her motive for not following their advice, she incurred their suspicions too; and they privately agreed that she had doubtless very good reasons for the step she had taken. However, it was no business of theirs; and as they had now reached the end of their journey, and the coach was driving into the inn-yard, they addressed themselves to their own affairs; namely, the identification of their luggage, paying the driver, and procuring vehicles to convey them to their several homes.

Meantime, Mrs. Watts and Lilly had also

descended; and as the first had only a bundle, and the last nothing, their transactions with the coachman were very soon terminated; and there remained nothing for either of them but to walk away in any direction she pleased; but Lilly stood still, because she did not know where to go; and Mrs. Watts did the same, from a different reason. She was herself not altogether unknown to Mrs. Treadgold; and, during the last quarter of an hour of their drive, she had formed a plan of addressing that lady, when she descended from the coach, on the subject of their forlorn fellow-passenger. But the plan was not so easily executed as formed. Two gentlemen were waiting with a coach ready to receive the lady, and they carried her off with such rapidity, that, without impertinently interrupting her first greetings with her friends, it was not possible to speak to her; so the poor woman stood still, watching Lilly, to see what she would do next.

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"Come! get out of the way, girl!" cried a man, with a weigh-bill in his hand; "there's no room for you here;" whereupon Lilly moved about three yards from the door of the office, and then stood still again. "Get out of the way!" said he again presently, giving her a push; "here's another coach coming up, and you'll be run over, I tell you!"

"Are you waiting for me, my dear?" said a vulgar-looking young man, who had been standing on the step and had overheard the clerk's address; and as he spoke he attempted to throw his arm round Lilly's waist.

"No, sir," said she, disengaging herself, impatiently.

"But that's very unkind," rejoined he, persevering in his unwelcome attentions; "I'm sure you wouldn't say no, if you knew me better. Are you a stranger in London? Come, I may be a friend to you."

"Please to let me go, sir," said Lilly, bursting into tears.

"Come along with me!" said Mrs. Watts, advancing and taking hold of her arm; "I can't find in my heart to leave you here alone!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE POOR ARE THE FRIENDS OF THE POOR.

Lilly needed no second invitation to induce her to accompany her good Samaritan; for she was beginning to have some idea of what it was to be a helpless stranger, without a friend, in a great city.

"We're but poor folks," said Mrs. Watts, as they made their way through the then dimly-lighted town, "but I couldn't answer it to my conscience to let you walk the streets at this time of night. We've no spare bed; but I'll spread a rug on the floor for you; and you'll be out of harm's way, at any rate; and to-morrow, you'd better go back to where you came from, before you've spent your money."

This was a heavy doom to Lilly; for to go back was to run into the jaws of the monster that was waiting to devour her; at least, thus she considered it. However, it was no time to make objections; so she tramped on through street and lane, crying, ready to break her heart, but saying nothing, till they reached a mean neighbourhood, betwixt Holborn and the Strand, where Mrs. Watts and her husband rented two upper rooms.

Though it was not far from midnight, there were little signs of repose either in the house or the street. At one part of the latter two men were fighting; the lights of a gin palace flared brightly in another; a poor creature with the remnant of a melodious voice was singing "Crazy Jane" in the middle; and at the door of the house Mrs. Watts entered stood a sturdy woman, damming up the entrance against a miserable-looking little man, who appeared to be her husband, and whom she was accusing of not having seen his home since the

previous Saturday morning. She was luckily too much occupied with her own squabble to attend to Mrs. Watts, who slid past her as quietly as she could, (for various reasons very glad to escape unnoticed) and, followed by Lilly, ascended the stairs to the top of the house. Her husband was already in bed, but, on recognising her voice, he arose, and let her in.

"Ah, Jane!" said he, "is it you? Well, what luck?" but perceiving Lilly, he added, "what! is this my brother's girl?"

"No, no," said Mrs. Watts. "This is a poor thing that came up on the coach with me, and she hasn't no where to sleep; and I didn't like to leave her to walk the streets all night."

"No, sure," said John; now that he had recovered his surprise, remembering his dishabille, and modestly retreating behind the door; "she can lie down on my bed, and I'll get a rug into the next room for myself."

"No, no, you'd better keep to your bed, John," returned the wife; "she's young and healthy, and can sleep any where."

But John's hospitality wouldn't hear of such an arrangement; and, finally, Lilly found herself inserted between the sheets, beside a pretty little girl of six years old, whose sleep was undisturbed by her mother's arrival, or the change of bedfellow; whilst John, having hastily drawn on his clothes, retired to the next room to hear the detail of his wife's adventures.

Alas! there was nothing good to tell. John's brother Abraham, who had lately died, was believed by his poor relations to have got together what they called "a good bit of money," which he had not the heart to spend; and, as he was known to be unmarried, although there were vague reports of his having an illegitimate daughter, poor John hoped to find himself the heir of his wealth. But there was no wealth to inherit; Abraham had been

thought a miser, and he prudently encouraged the report; the truth being that he was very poor and had nothing to hoard. However, his reputation for wealth had stood him in good stead whilst he lived, exempting him from many of the evils of poverty; and when he died and people discovered their mistake, they might digest their disappointment as they could.

So thought Abraham Watts; and even with respect to his brother he was equally indifferent; not unfrequently laughing in his sleeve at what he called "John counting his chickens." But it was no joke to John and Jane; and indeed it was with the greatest difficulty that the former in his honesty and simplicity could be brought to believe that his brother had so cruelly deluded them. He had a little packet of Abraham's letters in an old trunk; and to these he now referred for self-justification; and there was enough in them certainly to authorize all the expectations he had indulged.

There was scarcely a letter without some sentence alluding to his own property, and to the circumstance of his having no heir but his dear brother John. In short, he had played "Sham Abraham" upon poor John, who, placing implicit faith in all he said, had sent off his wife on the receipt of a letter announcing his brother's death; devoting to the expenses of the journey, at a period when their fortunes were at the lowest ebb, all the money he could get together, amounting to about three pounds; one of which was at that very moment due to their landlady, Mrs. Thom, for rent. Thus, as is too often the case with poor people, this delusive gleam of hope was good for nothing but to plunge them into deeper distress than they were in before.

For some time, the poor husband and wife sat up talking over their misfortunes; but people who have to work for their bread cannot afford to lose their night's rest; and fatigue, by procuring them that sleep which

forsakes the pillows of the rich Unhappy, is a medicine, and considerable counterbalance, to their woe.

Lilly was awakened in the morning by the cries of the little girl, who on opening her eyes was frightened at seeing a stranger in bed with her; but the sight of her mother soon dried her tears; and the poor family arose and prepared for their humble breakfast. It was during this repast that for the first time John was made acquainted with Lilly's story, so far as his wife knew it. An overworked, patient, gentle-spirited man, he had no harsh remarks to make upon her folly—to him there was nothing incomprehensible in the fear of reproof that had deterred her from going back to her situation, after the offence she had given; but he united with his wife in recommending her immediate return; and proposed himself securing a place for her on the top of the night coach, as he passed to his work.

"I see you don't like the thoughts of going back," said he, for, though she ventured no objection, Lilly looked very down-hearted every time she heard her doom reiterated; "but you'll never get on here without friends, or any body to give you a character. If we could help you, we'd be willing enough; but we can't help ourselves, worse luck! And London's no place for a stranger; especially a young woman like you." And John's *like you* was not without meaning; the truth being, that Lilly was now rather a pretty girl. The thick white complexion, that had formerly disfigured her, had given place to a clear red and white; and every body knows how much roses and lilies have to do with female beauty; whilst the heavy, stolid expression her features had acquired from hardship and over-work had changed to one of extreme simplicity and good nature; which were really, at present, the distinguishing characteristics of her mind.

They had finished their breakfast, and John was just preparing to depart for his daily labour, when the door opened, and in walked Mrs. Thom, the virago who had been apostrophizing her husband at the door on the previous evening when the travellers arrived. A more unwelcome visitor could not have appeared; and the expression of the two faces that met her view did not tend to sweeten the tone of her subsequent discourse. However, Mrs. Watts offered her the chair from which she had herself just risen; whilst John dropped again into his, on the opposite side of the table, nerving himself, as well as he could, to meet the brunt of the battle. Had Lilly had more *savoir vivre*, she would naturally have retired into the adjoining room on perceiving that the visit was one of business; and if she had, probably the whole current of her future life might have changed its direction; but, as it happened, her timidity and ignorance kept her where she was—that is, sitting on a wooden

box, in a corner of the room, with the baby in her lap, which the mother had just before requested her to hold.

"I suppose I needn't say what brings me up so early?" said Mrs. Thom, in a tone of dry decision. "Nothing but being chock sure of the money when your missus came back could have got me to wait so long; for I've been very badly off for it, I can tell you. That drunken scoundrel ha'n't been home till last night—and then I wouldn't let him set his foot inside the door—since he got his wages."

"But I wouldn't drive him away when he did come, if I were you," said Mrs. Watts.

"Not drive him away!" exclaimed Mrs. Thom, indignantly; "do you think I'd encourage such a drunken beast! Why don't he bring his money home to his poor wife and children that want it. Suppose I went on as he does, where should we all be? If it wasn't for my lodgings, we might all want bread for *him!*"

"It's very bad," said Mrs. Watts; "only, driving him away must make him worse, you know."

"Make him worse! Let it make him worse, then! its only what he deserves! A man that has no feeling for his wife and young family! —and I'm sure, though I say it that shouldn't say it, I've been as good a wife to him as...." here Mrs. Thom's eloquence being impeded by the want of a simile, as too frequently happens to orators, her mind naturally reverted to the occasion of her visit. "As I was saying, if it wasn't for my lodgers, I should like to know how I should pay the baker's bill? If it wasn't for your money that's coming in, and has been due this fortnight, we might sup upon our fingers, for anything he'd care."

"I'm very sorry," began John, who during this discourse had sat with his head leaning on his hand, in the attitude of the poor farmer in Wilkie's "*Distraining for Rent;*" "I'm very sorry, but...."

"But me no buts, now, Mr. Watts, if you please!" said Mrs. Thom, interrupting him. "I want my money, and I must have my money. It's not a little that 'ud have kept me out of it for a fortnight, and me and my children wanting bread; but as you'd got a fine fortin left you, it wasn't me that 'ud bar your getting it for the matter of a week or two —though it isn't every body that 'ud ha' waited as I've done. But waiting's waiting, and paying's paying; and now I'll thank you to come down with the money, which is just one pound five shillings, being one quarter's rent for these two rooms—and cheap they are at the price! There isn't two better nor more respectabler rooms in the street!"

"It's very unlucky," said Mrs. Watts, who, partly because she did not like to encounter Mrs. Thom's fierce eye, and partly that she might be at hand to sustain and second John, had placed herself behind the landlady's chair, on the back of which she leaned,—"it's very

unlucky indeed! But it wasn't only us, but everybody that knew Abraham Watts, thought he had a lot of money hoarded up somewhere; and he always told John in his letters that we were to have it."

"And who's got it?" inquired Mrs. Thom, diverted from her own interest, for an instant, by her sympathy with the lucky person, whoever he might be.

"There was none to get," said John, with a heavy sigh. "It was a cruel thing of my brother to deceive us. I could show you letters, Mrs. Thom..."

"It isn't letters I want, Mr. Watts," interrupted the landlady. "I comes here for my money, one pound five shillings. There it is, on a bit of paper, and a receipt to it all ready. I brought it up on purpose—twenty-five shillings—gold or paper, it's all alike to me, so I gets it."

"We haven't got it," said John, sadly, but firmly. "You know, Mrs. Thom, that illness

I had in March has thrown us back terribly; if it hadn't been for that—"

"Mr. Watts," said Mrs. Thom, "if me no ifs; it wasn't for to hear *ifs*, nor *ands* neither, as I left my tub to come up here to you this morning. What I want is my quarter's rent, one pound five shillings; that's what I comed for, and that's what I'll have!" and as she announced this determination, she clenched it by an expressive thump of her fist upon the table.

"I can't pay it," said John, in the same firm but dejected tone—a tone which, whilst it betrayed the deepest sorrow, and a consciousness that to petition for longer delay would be useless, seemed to forswear all attempts at subterfuge or evasion. "I can't pay it," said he; but at that moment a timid hand was stretched forward from behind Mrs. Watts, and the twenty-five shillings were laid on the table before the landlady.

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Watts, trying to arrest the arm.

"No!" cried John, rising from his chair; "we're not going to rob the stranger that has taken shelter with us," and he extended his hand to push back the money. But he was too late. No sooner had Mrs. Thom's eye fallen on it, than she had scraped it into her pocket, whilst, with a hearty laugh, and a countenance glowing with satisfaction, she congratulated John and his wife on this timely assistance, not forgetting a compliment to their benefactress.

"Upon *my* word, miss," said she, to Lilly, who had slunk back to the corner, blushing crimson at her good deed, "upon *my* word, if that isn't behaving like a lady, I don't know what is! I'm sure I wish I'd such a friend!"

"It's very wrong, indeed!" said John, whilst Mrs. Watts wiped her eyes with the corner of her 'apron. "We've no right to take what we don't know how to pay back."

"What's that to you!" said Mrs. Thom. "Ha'n't you a right to take what folks gives

you, without asking? Thank ye, miss," she added, addressing Lilly, as she pushed back her chair, and prepared to take her leave. "Such friends as you's always welcome: and all I can say is, that I hope there's plenty more where that comed from!"

CHAPTER V.

LILLY OBTAINS A SITUATION.

As soon as Mrs. Thom had closed the door, John Watts laid his head upon the table, covering his face with his hands, and his wife dropped into the chair the landlady had left, and relieved her feelings by tears; whilst Lilly still sat nursing the baby in the corner, and the little girl, who during Mrs. Thom's visit had been amusing herself by playing with a rag doll, now crept to her mother, and laid her curly head in her lap, instinctively sympathizing with the feelings of her parents.

"I shouldn't mind it," said John, "if I saw how I could pay it back."

"Perhaps, if you keep your health, we may do better next half," said Mrs. Watts,

who did not like to see her husband so depressed.

"But how's the young woman to find her way to the place she came from?" said John. "And what can she do here?"

"Perhaps we may get something for her to do," said Jane, wishing to console him; "but I say, John, do you know what o'clock it is? you'll be late at your work!" At which intimation, John, who for the moment had forgotten his duty in his sorrows, started from his chair, and, taking his cap from the nail where it hung, hastily quitted the room. Then Jane sat down beside Lilly, and having taken the baby, who was beginning to whine for its mother's bosom, she entered into conversation with her about the future.

Nothing could have been more entirely disinterested than Lilly's timely assistance; for she had acted wholly on the impulse of the moment, as it was her nature to do when her impulses were not forcibly suppressed by her

fears: but, had she calculated the result, she could have done nothing better for her own interest; at least, for her own object—for what line of conduct might prove most conducive to her interest no one could yet forsee. She had, at all events, put it out of her own power to follow that advice, which she could scarcely have rejected, however disagreeable it was to herself; she must needs have allowed John to secure her a place on the coach; and, unless she chose to throw herself, a houseless wanderer, on the streets, she must have travelled back to whence she came, and thus probably have run into the jaws of Luke Littenhaus. Now, she must stay where she was; and it had become the duty as well as the desire of John and Jane Watts to do all they could to help her to some means of getting her bread. Jane herself was a clear starcher, and, till John's illness, which had thrown them behind in the world, they had always contrived to make both ends meet, though

they could not do more; but now, as we have seen, they were very poor, unable to maintain their own family, still less any addition to it.

"Can you do needlework well?" she asked of Lilly.

"I can hem and sow pretty well," answered the other; "but I can't stitch well, nor make button-holes."

"Then you won't do for the plain work-shops," said Mrs. Watts.

"I could do house-work, or take care of children," said Lilly. "At Mrs. Ross's, I was under-nurserymaid."

"But people are so particular about character for that," objected Mrs. Watts—"I mean for nurserymaid; but I'll speak about it at the places I work for; and, meanwhile, if you'll take care of my baby, it will give me more time for my business;" and, accordingly, Lilly became at once nurse and maid of all work; whilst Mrs. Watts went forth amongst her customers to obtain employment,

and then set herself to execute their commands.

Amongst the persons she worked for was that Mrs. Knox, whom she had mentioned as Mrs. Treadgold's sister. These ladies had been the daughters of a small farmer, but marriage had somewhat divided their subsequent careers. When the eldest married Mr. Knox, who kept a straw bonnet-shop in Oxford Street, it was thought a very good match for a portionless girl; but when Christina, the youngest, who was handsome, was selected for a wife by Thomas Treadgold, Esq., the humble fortunes of her sister were wholly eclipsed; and although the good understanding and family friendship that had previously subsisted between them still survived, their further intercourse was subjected to considerable restrictions.

Mr. Treadgold had been brought up in the office of Mr. Ross, who reckoned amongst his clients most of the principal gentlemen of

the county; and, amongst the rest, General Markham. Quickwitted and industrious, young Treadgold speedily rose to be first clerk; and, being brought much into communication with his master's clients, some of them, with General Markham at their head, advised him to set up for himself, and promised him the agency of their estates.

He followed their council; and, so rapid was his progress, that he was soon in a fair way of making an ample fortune, and could afford to indulge his inclinations by marrying the pretty Christina Allison, whom he had half fallen in love with in his boyhood, when they attended the Dame school together in their native village. Thus, the young bride rose at once into another sphere of society; for, besides the most opulent of the middle classes, her husband, and occasionally herself, were received at the tables of the proud county aristocracy; and with any of these it was impossible to bring the milliner of Oxford Street

into approximation. Very glad indeed Mrs. Treadgold would have been to have given her sister a little country air now and then; but, alas! she had not the courage. And yet her neighbours knew as well as she did herself who and what her sister was, though they had been born in another county; such delicate little secrets always creep out. Nay, they knew the very shop; and would buy a bonnet there, when they went to London, for the sake of seeing Mrs. Treadgold's sister behind the counter—they were the wives of the doctors, and lawyers, and so forth, who did this—as for the real aristocracy, the whole affair was beneath their notice; the agent's wife and the milliner being so far below themselves, that to their optics they appeared both on a level. Every body knew, too, where Mrs. Treadgold went when she visited London; so that, in fact, she gained nothing in the world by these sacrifices to her own gentility and the folly of mankind—or

rather of womankind—except more or less of the contempt of those whose prejudices she stood in awe of; for, though probably not one of them would have had the courage to do otherwise—nay, some were, in one shape or another, doing the very same thing—yet they all saw the weakness and cowardice of the oblation, and would have respected Mrs. Treadgold much more if she had not made it.

Lilly had been an inmate of the Watts family some three or four days, when John's brother, who had formerly been a cleaner of knives and shoes at Mr. Treadgold's, and since promoted to be an errand-boy at Mr. Knox's, arrived with a packet of lace, and some fine muslin caps to be clear-starched. They belonged to Mrs. Treadgold, who always seized the occasion of these annual visits to refresh her wardrobe.

"I don't think she knew me," said Jane; "but I came up by the same coach that she did."

"She's come at a bad time for us," said

Tom; "for we're all at sixes and sevens at our house."

"It's just the busy time," observed Jane.

"Yes," said Tom; "the ladies runs so upon straw bonnets this month; and missus can't get sowers enough."

"Can't she," said Jane, whose thoughts instantly reverted to Lilly; "I wonder if it's work any body can do."

"No, I don't think it is; I believe they have to learn it," answered Tom; "why? would you take it?"

"Not I; I couldn't leave John and the children," returned Jane; "but I've a friend I should be very glad to get in, if I could."

"Can she do it?" inquired Tom.

"Well, she's young and she could learn," said Jane; "every body must have a beginning. I've a great mind to go to Mrs. Knox and speak about it."

"Well, do," replied Tom; "I know they want sowers, terrible."

Upon the strength of this hope, Mrs. Watts immediately set to work at the clear-starching; and having by a little extra diligence completed the job by the next day, she started for Oxford Street, leaving Lilly to take care of the children.

"I mustn't say anything about the running away, nor how she came up," thought Jane, "or they'll take a bad opinion of her at once;" so, accordingly, she merely mentioned Lilly as a young person wanting employment, and willing to turn her hand to anything.

"But does she know the business?" inquired Mrs. Knox.

"No, ma'am, I can't say she does; but she'd be quick at learning it," answered Jane, at a venture; "and she's the most good-tempered, obliging young person I ever saw."

"That's something, certainly; but is her conduct respectable? for we get so many that are not."

"Oh, yes, ma'am," answered Jane, with

great confidence; for she really thought herself quite safe upon that head; and, for the rest, she considered herself bound to venture something for one who had served her so opportunely. "Lilly didn't stop to think how she was to do without her money," thought she; "and I must risk something to help her to earn her bread decently; or else who can tell what may come of her."

Fortunately, Mrs. Knox *was* in very great want of hands at the moment; and, as she had an excellent opinion of Jane, and was exceedingly afraid of getting dishonest or disreputable girls into the house, she consented to give Lilly a trial; and Jane returned home quite overjoyed at her success.

That night they sat up late, washing and ironing Lilly's habiliments; for she had not an article of clothing but what she wore; and, on the following morning, Jane conducted her to her new situation. "You'll come back to sleep," she said; "for none of the girls

are allowed to sleep in the house—no wonder they're so apt to turn out ill, poor things!" And presently Lilly found herself seated amongst some ten or a dozen young people of her own age, and of various degrees of skill. For her part, she was set to the coarsest preliminary work; and awkward enough she was, at first; but she was urged to success by strong motives; and, in the mean time, her unabating diligence and quiet deportment told much in her favour. Her wages, however, were but a bare pittance, but they were enough to furnish her breakfast and other small necessaries; whilst she slept under the roof of John Watts; and got her dinner and tea where she worked.

For the first few nights, John fetched her; but, as the young people were often kept at work till midnight, this was necessarily given up, as soon as she knew her way, and declared herself able to thread the throng alone. But in the beginning, for his brother and sister's

sakes, and afterwards from another motive—Tom, when he could manage it, would offer to escort her. So that, on the whole, considering the apparent hopelessness of her prospects on the night she arrived in London, matters had taken a better turn than could have been well expected; so, for the present, we will leave her making straw bonnets, and return to those she left behind her.

CHAPTER VI.

LILLY IN LOVE AGAIN.

Having conducted Luke to a house where he could be provided with lodgings for the night, Giles turned his steps homewards, and rang up his wife.

"Have you seen that girl, Lilly Dawson, lately?" was one of his earliest questions; "is she still at Mr. Ross's.

"Yes," replied Martha; "she's doing very well, and they are quite satisfied with her—it's a lucky thing she got the situation, poor girl, wasn't it?"

"Very," returned Giles, with unusual sincerity; for he naturally reflected that, if she had not, he might have lost sight of her. "Does she come here often?" he inquired.

"Sometimes, of a Sunday evening—indeed, generally, after she has been to see my father."

"Is it always of a Sunday she comes?"

"Almost always," returned Martha, beginning to wonder at this sudden interest in the despised Lilly; and, when Giles proceeded so far as to inquire the hour at which she usually made her visits, she felt so assured that he must be actuated by some selfish motive, that she said, "Why do you ask?" He gave her no reason, however, but turned the conversation.

On the following morning, he went out to look after his new acquaintance, Luke; and, presently after he was gone, one of the servants from Mrs. Ross's called to inquire if Mrs. Lintock had seen Lilly.

"No," said Martha; "why?"

"Because she ran away last night after setting the house on fire, and has never come back."

"What!" exclaimed Martha, turning pale. "You don't say Lilly's gone!"

"She's gone from us," returned the man; "haven't you seen her?"

"No," returned Martha. "Lilly gone!"

"They don't think she has taken anything away with her; but if missus hadn't gone up to the nursery, the children would have been all burnt in their beds," said he.

Martha folded her hands and sunk into a chair, staring at the man, really incapable of receiving as fact intelligence which appeared to her out of the range of possibility. Her acquaintance with Lilly was certainly but of late date; but her father's opinion of the girl was so fixed, and had been so countenanced and corroborated by her own experience, that to believe all at once that she had been cunningly persevering in an assumed character for so many months, was a sort of conversion that would have undermined her whole code of faith. If Lilly were not what she had seemed,

she must be the most finished hypocrite that ever lived—and all for what? For the mere pleasure of deceiving.

Martha was too honest and sincere herself to believe this very readily. She asked, "Had she been reproved? Had she been scolded?" Not that the man knew of; missus had paid her wages in the morning; and he believed Mrs. Janet thought she had been drinking. Martha could have almost laughed at this; it was so out of all keeping; but if anybody knew anything of Lilly, it would be her father; so she resolved to go to him.

It was a dreadful shock to Abel to learn that Lilly had not been home since she left him; what he feared was, that the possession of the money had brought her into danger. Or, could it be possible that, captivated with the wandering life she had led in his company, she had resolved to pursue it alone, on finding he would not go with her. Finally, they

rather inclined to this opinion; since it was more accordant with Lilly's character—her impulsive nature and her entire ignorance of the world—than any other supposition.

Martha went next to Mrs. Ross's, in order to ascertain the truth with respect to the girl's departure, but she could learn no more than the man had told her; only that Mrs. Ross was not disposed to adopt the opinion that Lilly had purposely set fire to the stocking, which the zealous and indignant Mrs. Janet rather inclined to; but wherefore and whither she had gone nobody could imagine.

"Can Giles's inquiries be in any way connected with her disappearance?" thought Martha. She could not see how that could be, nor could she conceive the motive of his curiosity; but, nevertheless, those very inquiries were the cause of her not mentioning the subject of her departure to him, which she would otherwise have naturally done.

The week passed on, and there were no tidings of Lilly; nor did Giles ask any more about her till the Sunday, although his frequent visits at home of an evening somewhat surprised his wife. But, when Sunday arrived, he became anxious; he was fidgeting in and out of the house all day, and at length could not forbear asking Martha whether she thought Lilly would come, and at what hour.

"I am afraid she will not come at all," said she.

"Not at all!" exclaimed Giles. "Why, I thought you said she generally came on a Sunday."

"So she did," returned Martha; "but she's left Mrs. Ross's, and nobody knows what's become of her."

"Left Mrs. Ross's, and nobody knows what is become of her!" exclaimed Giles. "What the devil do you mean?"

"I mean just that," answered Martha.

"She went away last Monday evening, after leaving my father."

"And why the h—ll didn't you tell me so before?" said he.

"I didn't know you cared about Lilly," returned Martha, raising her eyes to his face.

"Gone away!" he reiterated. "What made her go?"

"That's what nobody knows," answered Martha. "She'd received her wages in the morning; and, sometimes, I'm half afraid some mischief is come to her."

At first, Giles suspected that his wife had, somehow or other, penetrated the plot formed against the girl, and had helped her to escape; but he was obliged to believe Martha's assurance to the contrary, for her truth was unimpeachable. The next idea was, that Lilly had discovered it herself, and to this supposition Luke inclined, when he heard the ill news. "She has somehow caught sight of me!" he said; but how, it seemed difficult

o conceive, as he had not entered the town, or even approached the suburbs, till so late an hour on the Monday evening.

But what was to be done now? Giles was no less disappointed than Luke; and his anger at his wife for not having communicated Lilly's departure earlier, when there might have been some chance of tracing her, was excessive. However, he swore he would find her; for, besides the motive furnished by the money, his spite now supplied a second. But accident had contrived Lilly's escape so ingeniously, that Jack Shepherd or Louis Mandrin themselves could scarcely have managed it better; neither her friends nor her enemies could discover what route she had taken.

Luke had, in some respects, the disposition of a bulldog; what he once fastened on, he never let go. Most people would have thought the hope of finding Lilly, even at the first, much too faint a gleam to follow. Not

so Luke. His determination was strengthened by opposition; and the compound of fear and avarice, which had formed his first motive for pursuing her, was now reinforced by revenge at his disappointment and defeat. He was like Othello; — what he would do, he knew not; but something he was resolved to do, that should gratify his vengeance or replace her in his power.

But what? There was the question; and, whilst he and Giles are debating this point, we will see what Lilly is doing in London.

The difference that a few weeks' residence at Mrs. Knox's made in her appearance was quite remarkable: Luke might very well have passed her in the street without recognising her. The healthy life she led with Abel, and subsequently with Mrs. Ross, had first brightened her eyes and cleared her complexion; and to these improvements were now added a certain grisette-like neatness that became her exceedingly. She had

quickly observed the difference betwixt herself and the other girls; and, being abashed by it, she endeavoured to repair the disadvantage by dressing her hair more neatly, and adding a few articles to her wardrobe.

Previously to this, Lilly had never thought of her person; and she had had as little inclination as means to adorn it. It was the *de haut en bas* manner of the young people she worked with, that first turned her eyes upon herself, and awakened something like shame at her own mean appearance. Not but the clothes she had worn when she quitted Mrs. Ross's were quite respectable; but, in the first place, she did not know how to wear them; and, in the next, they were rapidly growing shabby. The first was the greatest disadvantage of the two; her companions could have excused her poverty; but her want of taste was contemptible. The first day Lilly put on a new pink spotted linen frock, made by a cousin of Jane Watts; and

a cottage bonnet, tied down with a pink and brown checked ribbon, was a very important period in her life; for, when she saw herself in the bit of glass that served the Watts family for a mirror, a vague notion dawned upon her mind *that she was pretty*.

She was extremely surprised; but she really could not help suspecting it. The idea had never struck her before; and the glow of satisfaction that thrilled through her nerves at the unexpected discovery brought a brighter colour to her cheek, and a decided confirmation of the pleasing suspicion; which even the attentions of Tom Watts had not awakened, though she sometimes wondered at them. Now she began to understand his motive; and, as the truth gleamed on her, she blushed again; and, somehow, the recollection of Philip Ryland recurred to her mind. Not that she had ever forgotten him; on the contrary, she thought much more frequently of him and his mother than on any subject what-

ever connected with her past life. They stood boldly out from the dull uniformity of her daily drudgery, which itself had so little to mark its course, that it was fast fading from her memory; her short intercourse with them was almost her only landmark.

But the recollection of Philip had never stirred her heart, or brought the colour to her cheek before—now it did both. In short, for the first time, Lilly felt she was a woman; and the consequences of this important revelation were by no means gratifying to her humble admirer. She comprehended that she must not encourage hopes she could not fulfil; and, as precautionary measures of this description are seldom executed with due moderation, Lilly, as her betters too frequently do on such occasions, rushed into an excess of coldness that confounded all Tom's calculations, and well nigh drove him frantic; and as this circumstance produced some unpleasant scenes and caused some dissatisfaction in

the bosoms of John and Jane Watts, Lilly found it advisable to relinquish the shelter they had hitherto afforded her, and seek a lodging elsewhere.

Amongst the young people that worked at Mrs. Knox's was a girl called May Elliott. She was, or at least had been, one of the prettiest young creatures that man's eye ever looked upon for evil. She was the daughter of Elliott, the stable-keeper, in whose company Lilly had travelled to London; and, having lost her mother in her infancy, she had been permitted by her father to grow up as wild as an untamed colt. She ran about the stable-yard, joked with the grooms, and rode astride on the horses' backs, without saddle or bridle; and her principles did not escape the forfeit which seems attached to all who have much to do with those seductive animals. When she grew older, she became her father's clerk; and, seated in a little office that looked into the yard, with the books before her, she kept

the accounts, and noted down the orders of his customers, whilst he attended to other branches of his business. A less desirable situation for a pretty young creature of fifteen could scarcely have been contrived;—exposed to all sorts of companionships, and left wholly to her own guidance, it was to be wondered that she did not do worse than she did; which was to form an attachment to a man of very indifferent character, called Maddox, who, for matters of business, frequented her father's stables. He was what is commonly called a gentleman; but he was a sharper who frequented horse-races and gaming-tables, and lived by them. His manners and appearance, however, fascinated May, who idolized what she called *style;* and, as Maddox knew old Elliott to be rich, he saw no objection to indulging his fancy for his lovely daughter—the only child he had.

Elliott, however, much as, through ignorance and want of reflection, he had neglected

his daughter's education and superintendence, did not choose to give her or his money to a man he looked upon as a scoundrel. He accordingly forbade the match, and withdrawing May from her office in the stable-yard, shut her up in the dull house, at the back of it, under the care of his sister; a bitter Christian, who was extremely pious, and hated everybody that was not, except her brother, whom she never resigned the hope of converting.

The consequence of this scheme of reform may be easily foreseen. May, wretched, and wearied out with the preaching, and the scolding, and the confinement, watched her opportunity, and ran away to her lover, who, she never doubted, would receive her with open arms. But she had reckoned too hastily on his attachment. May Elliott, with her father's consent and without it, was a very different person. With it, he was still ready to marry her; without it, he would have no-

thing to say to her. But Elliott, enraged at the step she had taken, was not only inexorable with regard to the marriage, but actually refused to receive his daughter again under his roof; and there is no telling to what evil she might have fallen, had not her mother's sister offered her the shelter of her humble home.

May was, at first, extremely unhappy. She blamed her father, and sometimes blamed herself; but, as it was rather the consequences of her error than its commission that she bewailed, she soon sought a little distraction in an attachment—or rather a flirtation, for he never touched her heart — with Giles Lintock, who had been an acquaintance of her early years. But Giles was just then on the point of marriage with poor Martha; and, in order to separate May from him, and enable her to provide for herself, her aunt had induced an acquaintance in London to teach her the straw-bonnet business, and thence she

had risen to be employed at Mrs. Knox's, where she was looked upon as a very valuable coadjutor; not so much for the work she did, as for the use that was made of her pretty face. Every bonnet that May put upon her head was a becoming one, however dowdy and ugly it might look in the hand; and people were apt to fancy that they had only to buy the bonnet to look like her. Her beauty, therefore, which had marred her fortune, might almost have made it again, if she could have been prudent; but she could not. She had a good salary, but she spent it all in dress and frivolities; and, whilst she had a wardrobe quite unbecoming her condition, she was generally in arrears with her rent.

Nobody had felt more contempt for Lilly, when she first appeared at Mrs. Knox's, than May Elliott; she had looked upon her indeed as quite beneath her notice; a circumstance that had exceedingly pained Lilly,

who was entirely captivated by May's beauty and *tournure*, and her gay offhand manners. Attired in silks, with her beautiful hair most becomingly and even fashionably arranged, she appeared to Lilly a sort of princess; and, when the poor girl was sent into the show-room with a message, she not unfrequently forgot what she had to say, whilst she lost herself in admiration of May Elliott's beauty.

Though the modest Lilly "never told her love," it was not long before the young people discovered it; and, as they were not aware that the enthusiastic love of one human being for another, although misplaced, is yet a sacred thing, they did not spare ridicule, which, shy as she was, distressed her exceedingly. But now May herself came to her aid. She saw nothing absurd in Lilly's admiration, and would not permit her adorer to be laughed at—for it was a real passion in its way; and May Elliott was to Lilly as much an impersonation of the ideal as if she

had been a Venus or a Minerva. Thus there originated, we will not say a friendship, but a sort of league, betwixt the two girls, in which protection was yielded for devotion. May would not allow Lilly to be teased or laughed at, and Lilly obeyed and waited upon May as if she were a goddess; and thus it arose, that when Lilly was forced to seek for a new home, May offered to let her share her lodging.

Setting aside the ethical view of the question, this was a wonderful step for Lilly; May's lodging being very superior to any thing she could have herself commanded; besides, as she had only her breakfast to purchase, her little wages enabled her to dress respectably; and, as with her means grew her ambition, so, in proportion to the development of the latter, low as were its aims, did her intellect brighten. She began now to see herself; and, from seeing herself, she proceeded to look around her, and see other

people and things; and, whereas, nothing had had a meaning for Lilly before, she now began to discern what was passing under her eyes, and to comprehend something of the world and of the human beings that inhabit it. She was like a person that had been born blind, and was now beginning to see and to be acquainted with objects with which she had always been familiar, but which she had not understood. We do not mean to imply, however, that she comprehended May Elliott. May was a riddle far beyond Lilly's guessing —indeed, she would not have presumed to try; she was too happy in being permitted to adore her, and in believing nobody was so clever, and so wise, and so good, as well as so handsome, as May Elliott.

CHAPTER VII.

LILLY MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

There was not a more constant attendant at church than May Elliott—there she saw fine people, and the fine people saw her; at least, she thought they did; and, no doubt, her pretty face did sometimes attract the eyes that looked down from the well-lined gallery-pews. Lilly, who had never been to church since she left Mrs. Ross's, would have liked very well to go too, but she had not courage to enter such a place alone; and May, not considering the pink-spotted frock sufficiently in accordance with her own toilet, did not invite her to accompany her, and yet, aware of Lilly's wishes, she did not like to leave her at home and alone. "I'll tell you what you

shall do, Lilly," said she; "go, and take a walk in Hyde Park; did you ever see the park?"

"No," said Lilly.

"Well, you shall go, then, and I'll show you the way—it's just straight along the street, so you can't go wrong; and I'll come round that way for you, as I come out of church; and Lilly, having her own little ambition, too, and being as proud of her linen frock as May was of her silk one, willingly accepted the offer.

As there seemed to be nobody in the park but nurses and children, she was neither noticed nor molested; and, having strolled about till she thought the service must be almost over, she seated herself near the gate, that she might be ready for her friend. She had not sat long, before a young woman came and sat down beside her. Lilly thought she knew her; but the girl not appearing to recognise her, she did not like to speak. Still,

she could not take her eyes from the stranger; and at length, the other seeming to notice this scrutiny, turned round and stared her full in the face. Then Lilly was sure—it was certainly Winny Weston—a good deal altered for the worse; perhaps, as much as Lilly was altered for the better; she was pale, thin, and poorly dressed; but still it was Winny; and almost involuntarily Lilly pronounced her name.

"Don't you remember me?" said she.

"No," answered Winny; "I never saw you before, to my recollection."

"Don't you remember me up at the Huntsman?" said Lilly.

"What!" exclaimed Winny, "are you Lilly Dawson, that lived up there with them devils?—God forgive me for calling them so! Why, how you *are* altered!"

"So are you," answered Lilly; "I wasn't sure it *was* you, at first."

"Well I may be," replied Winny; "but

only think of your being in London all the while! For my part, I always thought you was dead; and I said so."

It is very odd, but people always laugh at the idea of being thought dead—whilst one's alive it seems so absurd! And yet, as the day will assuredly come when we shall think it a very serious matter, one might be tempted to wonder where the comedy lies; but it is probably in the contrast. Howbeit, Lilly laughed. "What made you think I was dead?" said she.

"I thought they'd murdered you," said Winny, "as they did poor Shorty;" and at the name of Shorty she burst into a passion of tears; her grief was as fresh as the day she lost him.

"Did they kill Shorty?" Lilly asked, looking very much amazed.

"I'd lay down my life upon it," answered Winny.

"Who told you?" inquired Lilly.

"Every thing told me," answered Winny.

As this was an assertion Lilly could not apprehend, she remained silent—not unaffected, but surprised and puzzled.

"But how, in the name of goodness, did you get away from them?" inquired Winny. "They said you had gone to see some friends you had, where they lived before they came to the Huntsman; but them might believe them that could. I never believed a word they said, for my part."

"I wouldn't have cousin Luke know where I am for the world," said Lilly, suddenly remembering the danger that might accrue to her from the recognition.

"You needn't be afraid he'll know it from me," answered Winny. "But now you're out of their clutches, perhaps you won't mind telling me what you know about Shorty."

"I don't know any thing," answered Lilly, "except that he was sent away for being out

o' nights—and cousin Luke said he staid out drinking."

"Drinking! Shorty drink!" cried Winny, indignant at the imputation on her departed lover; "Shorty never took a mug of beer more than was good for him in his life! He went out to look for Mr. Ryland, and nothing else. Did you ever know what came of old Mr. Ryland?"

"No," replied Lilly, blushing from the consciousness that she was not telling the whole truth. She certainly did not *know* what had become of the miller; but she very strongly suspected that she knew where his body might be found; but not for the world would she have breathed this thought to any one; not even to Philip himself.

"It's my belief you know more than you like to say," continued Winny. "However, never mind; it 'ill all come out some day, you see if it don't."

"What'll come out?" inquired Lilly.

"It's natural for a person to stand up for their relations, to be sure," remarked Winny; "though I don't see that you was much beholden to 'em, either. I'm sure you don't look like the same person you was when you lived up there."

"I'm a great deal happier, now," observed Lilly.

"No wonder! Who wouldn't?" answered Winny, in whom the feminine instinct, quickened by her affection, had bred an absolute antipathy to the Littenhaus family.

"Well, it's well for you you're out of their claws," she continued, perceiving that Lilly was not disposed to be communicative. "I wish poor Philip Ryland was away from them, too."

"Philip! Is he there still?" inquired Lilly, blushing again.

"Ah," said Winny; "many a time when he came into the village he spoke about you, and asked if we could guess where you were;

because one day he overheard them saying you had run away. But I said I was sure you hadn't the spirit to do it. I'm sure I wonder *he* don't run away, for they lead him a shocking life, *I* know."

"But how came you to London?" asked Lilly.

"I never could be happy there, after what happened to poor Shorty," said Winny. "Every time I saw them people come into the village, my blood boiled so, that I used to tell poor mother, that if I'd been a man, I'd have done something to them—I'm sure I couldn't have helped it."

"And is your mother in London, too?" inquired Lilly.

"No," said Winny; "what should she do here, poor old soul! No; I came up to be servant to a family that wanted a strong, healthy girl, from the country; but, what with the hard work, and the fretting, and one thing or another, I fell ill, and they put me

into the hospital; and I'm just come out of it."

"And are you going back to your place?" said Lilly.

"No; they say I'm not strong enough for them, and they've got another servant," answered Winny; "so I've been to an office where they recommend you to places, and I am to go and see a lady to-morrow."

As now Lilly saw May Elliott approaching, she rose and took leave of Winny, after telling her where she might hear of her.

"Who was that you were talking to?" said May.

"It's a girl from the place I come from," answered Lilly; "and then she related Winny's story, omitting, however, the charge brought against her cousins; and ending with a request that May would recommend her to a place, if she could."

"I can recommend her to a very good one," said May. "There was one of our

customers asking Mrs. Knox to get her a servant only yesterday."

"Shall I go and tell her?" said Lilly.

"Yes, do," said May; "and tell her to come and call, and I'll speak to her this evening."

Poor Winny, who had come out of the hospital with scarcely a shilling betwixt her and destitution, gladly accepted the offer; and, in the evening, she called at May's lodging at the time appointed. "The family only keep two servants," said May; "and I believe there is a good deal to do, because the gentleman is nearly blind. He's a colonel on half-pay; and they have only one son, and they live at No. 6, Elm's Row, Lambeth. If you go there to-morrow, and say you were recommended by Miss Elliott, at Mrs. Knox's, Mrs. Adams will see you."

As the girls were at tea, Winny was invited to take some with them; and, before it was over, May was in full possession of every

particular regarding Winny's history and her lover's disappearance, which, being the subject her heart was always full of, she required little inducement to talk about it. May, whose acuteness and knowledge of the ways of the world far exceeded that of the other two girls, found her curiosity a good deal excited by the story; and by her questions she elicited from Lilly an account of the proceedings at the Huntsman, which excited it still more.

"Depend on it, those cousins of yours are a bad set, Lilly," said she, after Winny was gone.

"Do you think so?" said Lilly.

"I've no doubt of it," said May; "I shouldn't like to lodge with them, I can tell you! I shouldn't wonder a bit if they robbed and murdered the travellers, as Jonathan Bradford was going to do. Was any body ever missing that lodged there?"

"There was one person," answered Lilly; "and people never knew what became of him—but I think I know."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed May. "Why, Lilly, you're as bad as they, if you don't tell."

"I don't mean that they killed him," said Lilly; "I don't think they'd do such a thing as that."

"I dare say they did," said May; "but there's a ring at the bell; go and see who it is;" and the conversation being thus interrupted, the subject was forgotten.

"Does Miss Elliott live here?" inquired the person who had rung at the bell. The voice was that of a man; but in the dim light of the evening, Lilly could not distinguish his features; however, she bade him walk in; and as he passed through the door into May's room, where there was a candle, she saw that it was Giles Lintock. Unacquainted with the intimacy that had formerly subsisted betwixt her friend and Martha's husband, she naturally concluded that he had come in pursuit of her, till she understood

by their familiar salutation that they were old friends.

"Well, May," said he; "I've found you out at last; I've been looking for you these two months."

"Have you?" said she; "what for?"

"I'll tell you presently," said he. "But what are you doing? How are you getting on?"

"I'm getting on very well," said May. 'I'm show-woman at Mrs. Knox's, in Oxford Street."

"And who's that girl that let me in?"

"She's a girl that works there, that I let live with me."

"Well, just send her out of the way, will you? I want to speak to you about something particular."

"Speak on; she won't hear you," said May. "I heard her go into the next room and shut the door."

"Well," said Giles, "as I said before, I've

been looking for you these two months. Mr. Cropley, the lawyer, wants to see you."

"Wants to see me?"

"Yes; but it's to be a great secret, whatever it is—so to begin, you must not mention to any body that he wants you, nor that I came to look for you."

"But what can he want me for? Is it my father that wants me?"

"I don't know; but I don't think it is. It's two months now since Mr. Cropley sent for me; and when I went, I found it was to ask me if I knew where you were. I said I didn't; and he bade me try and find out for him. I didn't dare go and ask your aunt myself; but at last I got somebody else to ask her; and when I told Mr. Cropley I had discovered you, he desired me to come up to London and find out what you were doing and how you were living."

"What's that to him?" said May.

"That I suppose he'll tell you himself," said Giles; "only I was to make out as much about you as I could and let him know; so I shall write to him by the post to-morrow."

When Giles was gone, Lilly emerged from the bedchamber, not a little alarmed. Of her previous history, her present benefactress (and a benefactress she really was) knew scarcely any thing, for May was too entirely occupied with herself to have much curiosity to spare for other people's affairs. That Lilly had had unkind relations and an unhappy home was nearly all she knew, till Winny's story had led to some further explanations; but Lilly now felt it advisable to enter into other particulars, since it was necessary to secure May's silence. She therefore narrated her past adventures; and pointed out the danger she apprehended from Giles Lintock should he recognise her. "If he knew who it was that opened the door to him, I'm sure he'd tell

my cousin," said she, after concluding her story.

" I dare say he would," said May ; " but, of course, I sha'n't tell him who it was, you know;" and May meant what she said.

CHAPTER VIII.

SELFISHNESS AND DEVOTION.

It is a trite thing to say, that many good qualities may harbour with many bad ones; and May Elliott, with all her imperfections, had yet her virtues too. She was good-natured, good-tempered, and benevolent. Even her extravagance was not altogether selfish, for she was as ready to give away money, when she had it, as to spend it on herself; but then she very seldom had it to give, except it was on the day she received her salary; by the next, it was generally gone for some superfluity quite inconsistent with her condition.

Her intentions towards Lilly were, in the first instance, really generous and kind. She

required her to pay nothing for her lodging; the only outlay demanded of her was, that she should furnish her share of the breakfast and the Sunday's provision; and on this footing they began.

In return, Lilly worked like a slave for May. She lighted the fire, prepared the breakfast, cleaned the rooms, dressed the Sunday's dinner; and sat up at night to mend her stockings and do whatever jobs of work she needed; and this she did with the greatest delight, and thinking she was doing nothing. But it was not long before her devotion was further taxed. When a loaf or half a pound of tea was wanted, Lilly was sent to fetch it; and May would say, "pay it, Lilly, will you? for I've no change;" till, gradually, Lilly paid every thing for May, as far as her money would go, and had nothing left to lay out upon herself. Still, not a suspicion crossed Lilly's mind, nor a thought degrading to her idol. As long as the money

lasted, it was paid without a murmur or a regret.

But unfortunately Lilly's small wages could not long furnish May's necessities. May could not eat salt butter, but must have fresh, at sixteen pence a pound; then she liked a drop of cream to her tea in the morning, and must have it sweetened with white sugar; and as her wants were all according to the same scale, Lilly's means soon became inadequate to supply them. Inexperienced in matters of economy, she had not foreseen this difficulty, and had commenced by partaking of the same fare that was provided for her friend; but, as soon as she perceived that their funds were failing, she began to curtail her own share of the indulgences that there might be the more for May. She ate her bread without butter, and drank her tea without sugar. May was much too quick-sighted not to observe this, and she would really rather that Lilly had fared the same as herself; but her generosity

went no further; it could not reach the length of self-denial; and she very soon became used to it; and then it seemed quite a matter of course that Lilly should breakfast on a crust of dry bread, whilst she had a new roll and butter; and that she should have cream and sugar, whilst Lilly had none.

Then, Lilly never grumbled, but always seemed so satisfied, that there could be no occasion to pity her privations; besides, she considered that it was a great thing for Lilly to have a lodging on such easy terms; whilst Lilly thought that to lodge with May, on any terms, was happiness enough. Nor was her gratitude at all diminished by May's selfishness and want of principle. Practically, Lilly's ethics were unexceptionable, but she was utterly devoid of theory; nobody had ever taken the trouble to teach her any.

Abel White might perhaps have done so, had he been fully aware of her uninstructed state; but her love for him, her habits of

obedience, and her naturally good disposition, stood her in stead of principles, and prevented his discovering the amount of her ignorance. A savage from the wilds of Australia could not have less ideas of duty than Lilly had. Obedience was the single virtue she had been taught; and when she was not acting under its influence, instinct was her only guide. Thus, the faults of May's character did not repel her, for she did not see them as faults.

But the little *ménage* could not long be supported upon Lilly's savings, and the hour of difficulty drew nigh; she blushed crimson the first time she had occasion to tell May she had no money to pay for the butter.

"Very well," said May; "tell the man you forgot to take the money with you, and that you will bring it to-morrow;" and Lilly obtained the butter and whatever else she wanted, by a promise of payment on the following day; but without saying she had forgotten the money. She fully expected May

would have given it her the next morning; but, as nothing was said on the subject, she supposed it had escaped her memory; or that, as usual, "she had no change."

The young people at Mrs. Knox's were paid either by the week or the month. Those of the higher class, like May, were paid monthly; the subordinate ones, like Lilly, received their money every Saturday night. When Lilly received her little salary at the end of the week, she called on her way home, at the shops where she was a debtor, and discharged the accounts; but, as she had only six shillings a week, and there had been a late purchase of tea and sugar, she arrived at home with an empty purse.

"What have you got for dinner to-morrow?" inquired May. "I declare I'm starving, with those nasty mutton-hashes we have every day at Mrs. Knox's!"

"I haven't got any thing yet," answered Lilly.

"Well, I should like a bit of something very nice," said May; "a nice tender beef-steak would do; but mind, it must be cut from the best part."

"He won't cut it from the best part, unless I take the money with me," answered Lilly.

"Well, then, take the money," said May.

"I haven't got any more," returned Lilly. "It took it all to pay the things we owed for."

"What things?" inquired May.

"What we've been having this week," returned Lilly. "You know I owed for the tea and sugar, and every thing."

"How could you be so stupid, Lilly?" said May; "when you know I'm so particular about having something for dinner on Sunday, and I told you only yesterday that I was sick at the sight of Mrs. Knox's dinners."

"I thought we must pay," answered Lilly, innocently.

"Well, but there was no such hurry!

Couldn't you wait till the month's up? and then I shall have plenty of money myself."

Lilly saw that she had been extremely stupid, and that she had deprived May of the good dinner she had relied on to make amends for the hashed mutton. However, she promised to go and see what could be done with the butcher.

"Tell him, you'll pay him on Monday," said May; and Lilly obeyed, and on this promise obtained the meat and the other things she required, and brought them home to May; who, as soon as her wishes were gratified, was perfectly contented, troubling herself not at all about how the promise was to be fulfilled.

But though to please May was Lilly's first object in life, yet her satisfaction on this occasion was very much alloyed; for she now comprehended that her friend had no money, and she had made this promise whilst perfectly

aware that she could not fulfil it; and do what she would, she could not shake off the uneasiness this consciousness occasioned her. Yet, what could she do? She could not let May go without such a dinner as she could relish—that was impossible! May's wants and wishes must be complied with; yet her natural integrity was painfully wounded by the deception she had practised. On the following day, however, when she saw how much May enjoyed the dinner; and (there being more than she could eat herself,) how kindly she made Lilly share the steak with her, instead of allowing her to dine on a bit of cold bacon—a relic of the previous Sunday's repast, as she had intended—she consoled herself. On the ensuing Saturday, May would receive her money, and then these little difficulties would cease; and, in the mean time, Lilly was so happy, and May was so kind!

"I saw such a lovely shawl in Bond Street, to-day," said May. "I'd have bought it di-

rectly if I had had the money with me. It would suit my new lilac silk so beautifully!" Lilly wished she had enough to buy the shawl for her friend; and regretted very much that the money, when it came in, must go for provisions and rent instead of being devoted to the adorning of that pretty person. She felt also rather embarrassed by a little need of her own, which would oblige her to spend her week's wages on herself, instead of devoting it to May, as had been the case for some time back. Her shoes were so worn, that she could scarcely keep them on her feet, and she was getting quite ashamed of appearing in them at Mrs. Knox's; whilst, for the last Sunday or two, she had actually refrained from walking out, on account of their dilapidated condition.

Feeling, therefore, that the shoes must be purchased, though sorry to appropriate the money to her own use, when she left work on Saturday night, she proceeded at once to a

shop in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, for the purpose of providing herself with what she needed. It was a small "Emporium,"—such was the name with which it was dignified—kept by a man and his wife, he selling shoes on one side, whilst she sold gloves and haberdashery on the other. It was a busy night, and a busy hour; and Lilly had to wait whilst several persons who were previously there were served. Amongst the rest was a respectable-looking elderly woman in mourning, who was buying a pair of black cotton gloves, and who, when she was served, instead of leaving the shop, seated herself on a stool, as if she were waiting for some one. Lilly had just got her shoes, and had laid down her money for them, when the woman, whose back was towards her, rose and moved to the door.

"Are you ready?" said a voice.

"Yes," she replied. "Have we anywhere else to go to-night, Philip?"

"You dropped this, ma'am," said Lilly, who

was waiting for sixpence out of her two half-crowns.

"Thank you, my dear," said the stranger, taking a little parcel that had fallen from her lap. "I'm not used to this bustling place, and it will be well if I don't lose myself before I'm out of it."

All the blood in Lilly's heart seemed to rush into her cheeks as those words were uttered. Should she speak? Should she let them go? It was Mrs. Ryland and Philip; he so grown, so altered, that she would not have recognised him, had not his mother called him by his name; her earliest friends, whom she had never ceased to love—they who had first shown her kindness, and awakened her heart out of its death-like sleep. They had looked at her and not spoken; perhaps they did not know her? Perhaps she had forfeited their good opinion by running away? and whilst she hesitated they had disappeared.

The opportunity of addressing them no

sooner seemed lost, than Lilly felt desperate; and, pushing through the throng, she rushed after them the way they had gone; but they had turned into some shop or street, for she could not find them, and after vainly seeking them for some time, she went home, overcome with grief and vexation at her own stupidity.

When she reached the lodging, May, who was generally allowed to leave Mrs. Knox's at an earlier hour than Lilly, was there before her. She had got two candles lighted, and was standing before an old dim looking-glass, in a carved frame, whose spotted face but indistinctly reflected her pretty figure, trying on a new shawl.

"I say, Lilly, isn't this a beauty?" said she, as her companion entered.

"It's beautiful!" answered Lilly; "what a handsome border it has! Have you bought it?"

"Yes: I could not help it," replied May;

"it will look lovely with my lilac silk, won't it?"

"How well you look in it!" exclaimed Lilly, contemplating May with admiring eyes.

"Do you think I do?" said May. "I'm so glad I bought it! But it cost a world of money!"

"Did it?" said Lilly.

"I believe it did," said May, with a smile and a significant nod; "but la, Lilly, what's the world worth, if one can't indulge one's fancy now and then?"

Lilly had no disposition to dispute this implied axiom, for she thought May had every right in the world to indulge her fancy; whilst May was so supremely happy in the possession of the shawl, that, for some time, she quite forgot that it was necessary to prepare for the next day's dinner. But she remembered it at last, and asked Lilly what she had provided.

"I did not know what to get," said Lilly.

"Oh, get anything!" said May, still too much occupied with her new acquisition to care much for what generally interested her considerably.

"Will you give me some money, please?" said Lilly, putting on her bonnet to hide her blushes.

"Haven't you got any?" said May, turning sharply round.

"No!" replied Lilly; "I've only a shilling; for I was obliged to buy a pair of shoes; and I forgot to bring away the sixpence change."

"How unlucky!" said May, impatiently; "and there's the woman wanting her rent. I'm sure I don't know what's to be done!"

Lilly felt quite distressed, and wished her shoes back in the man's shop.

However, the rent was paid, and the dinner was bought, and they went on again as before;

that is, living on such credit as they could get, and on Lilly's small wages, for May had not sixpence left of hers, so large a portion having been spent upon the shawl.

CHAPTER IX.

OLD FRIENDS.

Lilly scarcely hoped it would be of any use, but, as in the present state of her finances sixpence was a sum by no means below her consideration, she bethought herself of calling at the shoe-shop on the Monday morning to tell the man that she had not received her change. Fortunately, he had observed her sudden exit, and had replaced the money in his till. "It was your own fault," said he; "I put down the sixpence, but you ran out of the shop as if you was frightened."

"It was to speak to somebody that had left a parcel," answered Lilly.

"The parcel would have been safe enough,"

said the man. "We should have sent it in to her—she lives next door."

"Does she?" said Lilly, eagerly turning back. "Does Mrs. Ryland live next door?"

"Yes, she does," replied the man. "I saw her pass out two minutes ago."

Here was news for Lilly, who had been grieving ever since Saturday over her own want of resolution. Now, she resolved she would see them. She would call at night as she came from work, and she was quite happy and excited all day in the expectation of the visit. But, when the evening came, her heart almost failed her; and, when she reached the door, she had not courage to open it. Perhaps they would not be glad to see her; perhaps they would not remember her at all.

It was a shop where meal, and seeds, and bread-stuffs were sold; and Lilly stood on the step, looking in through the glass door, to reconnoitre the interior. Behind the counter

stood an elderly sickly-looking woman, wearing the dress of a widow; and a young lad near the desk was just taking off his jacket and apron, and putting on a black coat;—but these were not her friends. Could the shoemaker be mistaken? She feared so, for, on looking at the name over the door, it was not *Ryland*, but *Dewar!*

"Allow me to pass?" said a young man, moving her aside, whilst a hand was placed on the latch of the door.

"Now or never!" thought Lilly, and, with a faltering voice, she murmured "Philip!"

"Did you speak to me?" said he, looking her in the face, but evidently not knowing her.

"I'm Lilly Dawson, that you knew at the Huntsman," said she.

"What?" said he, taking hold of her arm, and drawing her into the light, "you're not Lilly Dawson!"

"Yes, I am," she answered. "I saw you

and Mrs. Ryland at the shoe-shop next door; that's the way I knew you were here."

"Come in!" said he. "How you are altered, to be sure! I should never have known you if you had not spoken. Mother!" cried he, leading her into a little room behind the shop, "who do you think this is?"

"Lork knows, my dear! Who is it?" said Mrs. Ryland, putting on her spectacles, and peering up at Lilly.

"It's Lilly Dawson, the little girl that used to live at the Huntsman."

"You don't say so!" said Mrs. Ryland. "Well, I should never have known her, I declare!"

"So you took my advice, and ran away, Lilly?" said Philip. "Well, you were quite right. I should have followed your example, I believe, if I couldn't have got away by any other means."

"But what are you doing, child, and how do you live?" inquired Mrs. Ryland; and,

thereupon, Lilly told them how she was situated; and was gradually led to narrate the history of her adventures, which created no little interest in the breasts of her auditors; but what puzzled them most was the strange desire manifested by Luke to marry a person for whom he had always evinced the greatest contempt, and from whose alliance, it seemed to them, no advantage was to be gained.

"If he saw you now, Lilly," said Philip, "I shouldn't wonder at his wishing to marry you; you are so much improved!" and as, when Philip made this remark, his eyes appeared to survey her with considerable satisfaction, Lilly blushed, and felt a little stir about her heart, accompanied by a sudden wish that she had had on her Sunday frock.

"Philip was very unhappy there at the mill," said Mrs. Ryland.

"And I was much worse off after you were gone, Lilly," said Philip, interrupting his mother; "for then I had no friend; and

often and often I wished you back again, I can tell you, when I was obliged to go to bed with a scanty dinner and no supper."

"But he bore it all for my sake," said Mrs. Ryland, "and without complaining too; for I never knew how badly he was off till my brother died."

She then proceeded to inform Lilly, that the late Mr. Dewar, the owner of the shop they were then in, was her brother; that he had a very comfortable business, and was doing extremely well, till an unfortunate accident had caused his death. When he found his end approaching, he had advised his wife, who was very sickly, to send for Mrs. Ryland and Philip, to come up and assist her with the business; his own son being only fourteen, and not fit to undertake the management of it.

"As I always hoped to end my days at the mill," said Mrs. Ryland, "and never could abide London when I came up to see my

brother, I was very unwilling to hear of this; but when I mentioned it to Philip, and I found how unhappy he was with them Littenhaus folks, and how glad he'd be to get away, I got Mr. Cobb to mention it to Sir Lawrence; and very well he behaved about it, to be sure. He got Philip off his apprenticeship with Mr. Luke; and he says, for all that, he shall have the mill when he's twenty-one, if he likes to take it."

Lilly went home happier than she had ever been in her life after this interview. The Rylands were so kind and friendly, and all her former love for them was so vividly reawakened in her heart! And her intercourse with them now was so different to what it had been formerly, when she had been the poor drudging Cinderella. Now, she was a smart, pretty girl, to whom Philip felt naturally disposed to be gallant; and whom his mother treated as an old friend; inviting her to dine with them on Sunday, and to call

frequently and see them. Betwixt her idolized May Elliott, on the one hand, and the Rylands, on the other, how rich she was in friends! She, who for so long a period had never seen a single gleam from the light of love on her path. Amidst all this joy, however, there was one little dark spot, and that was the mortification she felt at not being able to make a better appearance when she went to dine with her friends on Sunday. She had got a pair of new, strong, clumsy shoes, certainly; for she had bought them for use, and not for ornament; but her bonnet was none of the best; and the sun and the washing-tub had considerably tarnished the lustre of the pink gingham.

Before she joined housekeeping with May, she had been laying by money for the purpose of indulging herself with a little finery; but her savings had all been dissolved into fresh butter and white sugar for her friend; and she had never been able to purchase an ar-

ticle for herself. Mrs. Ryland and her son were so well dressed, too, that it was the more mortifying to appear before them in such shabby attire. If she could only buy a frock, there was plenty of time to get it made, and, by forestalling a couple of weeks' wages, she might have done it perfectly; but then what was May to do for her luxuries? How could she ever confess to having bought a frock when there was nothing for the Sunday's dinner? She felt she could not — it would be so unkind to May, and so selfish!—so she did not do it; but contented herself with her old clothes, or rather submitted to them; for the consciousness of them never left her all day; diminishing her confidence, and marring the completeness of her satisfaction.

Mrs. Ryland, however, was very kind; she thought nothing about her dress; whilst Philip admired her smooth hair and soft, blue eyes and delicate features; and thought her a great deal prettier from contrasting what

she was with what she had been. Her modesty and timidity pleased them too; they wondered to find her not at all spoiled by living in London and growing pretty. But Lilly was always thinking of somebody else—seldom of herself; and was, therefore, not easily spoiled.

As May had always her own engagements and diversions for a Sunday afternoon, and as she never invited Lilly to accompany her on these occasions, the latter was at liberty to spend the day with her friends, after she had cooked May's dinner, which she did with unfailing punctuality, before she thought of her own pleasures. Thus, her intimacy with the Rylands improved rapidly, and everybody who knows the charm of meeting an old acquaintance in a strange place will easily comprehend this. Sometimes, too, she ran in of an evening, as she came from her work; and not unfrequently she met Philip taking a stroll at that hour, when the business of the

day was done; and then he would give her his arm and walk home with her; and they would talk over past times, and laugh at the recollection of the "stupid little girl," and the half-starved boy; and the hunches of bread and the lumps of pudding she used to secrete for him. In short, they grew, from day to day, more familiar, more unreserved, more affectionate with each other. For all that passed between them, they might have been brother and sister; but the animated countenances, the sparkling eyes, and the bounding hearts with which they met, were evidences of a sentiment not purely fraternal. However, they did not trouble themselves to analyze their own feelings; they were happy —that was sufficient.

Philip's situation too was a pleasant one enough. Under the instructions of the widow, whose ill health rendered her personally inactive, he carried on the business, which furnished him both with employment and a

small remuneration for his services. Lilly also was promoted to a salary of ten shillings a week, which, with her own limited wants and quiet habits, would have made her rich, could she have retained her money for her own use. But May, who was ever in arrears, still kept her purse empty, and her wardrobe ill furnished; whilst Lilly's idolatrous love scarcely permitted her to feel the wrong she suffered.

CHAPTER X.

BREAKERS AHEAD!

It is not to be supposed that Lilly's intimacy with the Rylands could continue without the repeated occurrence of May's name, and frequent dissertations on her beauty and merit; and when Philip was inclined for a jest, it was generally at the expense of this unknown idol. He would select some particularly ugly, ill-dressed girl in the street, and ask Lilly if that was not May Elliott; or he would tell her that, at last, he really had seen her; he had been to Mrs. Knox's with an acquaintance who went to buy a bonnet, and May had served them; and then he would proceed to laud her in the most hyber-

bolical manner, to Lilly's great delight, till she found he was quizzing her.

But, as Philip had insight enough to comprehend that Lilly's enthusiastic attachments were the results of her own character, rather than the consequence of other people's deserts, his curiosity was, in reality, not the least excited about May, any more than hers was excited about him. Indeed, for her part, the idea she entertained of Philip was anything but flattering. "Some country hobbitihoy of a miller's boy" was the way she designated him in her own mind, rashly concluding that poor Lilly's friends were not likely to be very interesting to her. But she was mistaken. Their acquaintance at length originated in the accident of Lilly's being confined one Sunday by a bad cold and sore throat, which obliged her to remain in bed, instead of paying her accustomed visit to her friends. She had been unwell when they had last seen her; and, apprehending

that augmented indisposition was the cause of her absence, Philip called to inquire for her. He had never visited her hitherto; but, as he had often walked home with her, he knew very well where she lived; and, ringing at the door, he inquired for Miss Dawson. The woman who answered him said she believed she was at home, and, bidding him ascend to the third story, and "take the door facing him," she left him to find his own way.

"Who's there? Come in!" said a voice that was not Lilly's.

However, Philip obeyed and entered. "I beg pardon," he said; "I came to inquire for Lilly Dawson."

"Oh! Lilly's in bed with a cold," said May, turning upon him her bright face; for she had got a new bonnet, and was trying it on at the glass; and, being conscious that it was extremely becoming, her features were, just at that moment, illuminated with pleasure.

"Can this be May Elliott?" thought Philip,

whilst he proceeded to say that he had called, fearing Lilly was ill, as they had not seen her for some days.

"Come in," said May. "You needn't be frightened at me;" for, somewhat surprised at what he saw, he stood with the door in his hand, ready to retreat. "If you'll come in and sit down," said she, "I'll tell Lilly you are here."

Philip did sit down, but he felt more confused and bewildered than he had ever done in his life. May Elliott appeared to him a lady of the very first water. The elegance of her attire and the easy self-possession of her air and manner quite dazzled him, and threw him aback. In short, if he had been suddenly introduced into the presence of Majesty itself, he could scarcely have been more impressed.

"Lilly's right this time, certainly," thought he, as May stepped into the adjoining room.

Lilly would have been very glad to have

risen to see her friend, but that was out of the question; she was too ill; so May had the charge of entertaining him—a charge which, however, she cheerfully performed, and indeed voluntarily incurred; for Philip's modesty would have prompted him to take an immediate leave, had she not given him marked encouragement to stay. But, although flattered himself, and admiring her, he found it impossible to recover his self-possession. The tone of May's manners and conversation were so entirely different to those of any woman he had met before, that he felt as if he were in the presence of a being of another race altogether. Certainly, his experience had been extremely limited; whilst such a phenomenon as May Elliott might have startled an older man from his propriety. Nevertheless, the consciousness of his confusion mortified him extremely; and he was never less pleased with Philip Ryland, than at the moment he closed the door of the

lady's apartment. But for this self-dissatisfaction, it is probable that, however much he admired her, he might never have made any further advances towards her acquaintance. But, unfortunately, his pride was wounded; he felt that she must look upon him as a shy, shamefaced boy; and, for a youth of eighteen to be so thought of by a pretty woman, is a severe trial to his self-love. It was, therefore, rather resentment at her superiority, than a desire to see her again, that determined him to take the earliest opportunity of repeating his visit. He would show her that he was not the awkward, stupid clown she doubtless took him for! and, with this manful determination, he returned on the following evening, Lilly's indisposition furnishing a sufficient excuse for his visit.

May was always well dressed; but this not being Sunday, her attire was less dazzling, and her demeanour consequently less imposing, than it had been the day before; so that

Philip's project of vindicating his manhood, and recovering his own self-esteem, was of more easy execution than he had expected; whilst May, who in the morning had thought it a pity so handsome a young man should be such a booby, began to suspect that it must have been the power of her own charms that had occasioned his confusion. It is true, she supposed him to be Lilly's lover; but that was no reason he should not admire her, nor that she should abstain from making herself agreeable to him; and thus each, under the influence of gratified vanity, showed themselves to the best advantage. It is true, their conversation was little varied; for, apart from Lilly, they had no subject of any interest to discuss, except themselves; for in those days books were expensive articles; and Philip had little reading, and she less. But that one subject, *ourselves*, is an inexhaustible one, provided we can get a good hearer—there is the only difficulty.

Strange that it should be so! — What do we study metaphysics for, or read novels— which should be metaphysics in action—but to get a peep into men's minds and motives? and possibly, if we were quite sure they would tell us their minds and motives, we might be more patient. But there is the rub—who dare be candid, except to some rare soul to whom we can speak as to our conscience! Men flee the Truth, and are so unaccustomed to her face, that it affrights them. We live in a continual seeming, and they are considered the safest and surest in society, who practice this seeming with the most unvarying fidelity. The outspeakers are all sufferers by their honesty; they are not "dwellers in decencies;" and, whilst they rend their own veil, every man trembles for the integrity of his. Time and experience teaches them prudence; till, at length, they learn to accommodate themselves to the climate; like some poor tropical plant, that is obliged to modify its na-

ture to new circumstances, and cease to shed its flowers and fruits in an ungenial atmosphere.

But, in the present instance, the incitement to listen was sufficient to procure each speaker an attentive auditor; for each was an object of lively curiosity to the other. When May related her own history and adventures, after her own manner—that is, with variations—representing herself as the victim of parental barbarity and an unhappy passion, Philip was moved with pity and indignation; and the effect the story produced upon him was not at all to be wondered at. He had never read a novel or romance in his life, and May's story was a romance to him; narrated, too, by the lovely lips of the heroine! Then her confidence was so flattering!—the transition from the previous embarrassment to the present ease and familiarity, so gratifying! No wonder he forgot Lilly as he bent his arms on the table before him, and with flushed cheeks sat looking into May's bright eyes.

Then she questioned him about himself, and inquired the history of his heart. "Had he never loved?" And Philip scarcely knew how to answer. When he entered that room, he had fancied he loved Lilly, but now he began to doubt it. Lilly had never flushed his cheek, or sent his blood careering through his veins as May did. They had met with pleasure, and parted in kindness; and he went home and slept easily on his pillow; but this night there was no sleep for Philip; he had drunk of the Syren's cup, and was in a state of intoxication! May's eyes had said such things to him—to him, a young country lad, who had been scarcely acquainted with any women, except his mother and Lilly. He seemed to have awakened into a new world, and what a bright world it seemed!

But Lilly! what was to become of her? Fortunately, he had never mentioned the word *love;* but still, as he had fancied himself attached to her, he feared he must have be-

trayed something of the sort by his manner. But probably she had not understood it; so simple, so humble, so inexperienced; it was not likely that she should; and still less likely that she should have entertained any corresponding sentiment. Her feeling for him was, doubtless, entirely that of a sister; and he would always be a brother to her, and do all he could to serve her. So he consoled and cajoled himself; not quite easy, the while, however, about her; but, whenever Lilly's pale lamp sought to put forth its modest ray, May Elliott's flaring torch would start up instantly and put it out.

Meantime, May slept calmly, and awoke refreshed; not that she was much less pleased with Philip than he was with her; but the feeling was different. The effect she had produced upon him appeared to her the most natural thing in the world, and it occasioned nothing beyond a pleasing excitement. It would be very interesting to observe the pro-

gress of her influence; as to what might be the result of their acquaintance it did not occur to her to consider. Neither did the thought of Lilly's probable pain give her any concern; for, with all her good nature, she never saw any body that stood in her own way; if they had that misfortune, she invariably ran them down, without mercy. Her good nature, which had gained her much good liking amongst her companions, was never practised at any personal expense. She would willingly do a kind thing, if it cost her nothing; but her benevolence never extended beyond this. It is true, that she would give away her money occasionally, when her purse was full, but this was only from her natural recklessness and extravagance; for she would give it to one, whilst she owed it to another; and she would not have refrained from purchasing a new shawl that took her fancy, though her dearest friend had been starving. For her, there was no individuality but her own; she

only conceived of others as in relation to herself; and out of these relations they had no existence whatever for her.

In short, May Elliott was a thorough specimen of a certain class of women; dazzling and dangerous; with a sufficient veneering of pleasing qualities to fascinate, and a sufficient alloy of bad ones to destroy, her victims—victims of her character, not of her designs. She did not mean to harm them; only, whilst galloping on to her own ends, she could not help running over them.

CHAPTER XI.

AND LILLY'S FRAIL BARK SWALLOWED UP IN THE VORTEX.

On the ensuing Sunday, Lilly, considering herself well, resolved, as soon as she had prepared May's dinner, for her own was a small matter, to go, as she had frequently done before, to the Rylands, accompany them to the afternoon service, and spend the evening with them. These Sundays, so spent, were the happiest days she had ever known. We are drawn by a singular tie to those whom we meet far from the locality of our first acquaintance; and to this bond in the present instance were added others. On Lilly's part, gratitude for early kindness; affection for the mother, and incipient love for the son. On Mrs. Ryland's, a motherly feeling, engendered

by pity and approbation; for she thought the way this forlorn young creature, cast upon the world without a friend, had contrived to earn her bread, was very creditable to her; and on Philip's there had been altogether a tender interest, compounded of gratitude, pity, and a lively sense of her ingenuous character and eager affections, together with the private opinion, that she was really a very sweet-looking girl. And so she was; much prettier than May Elliott to a wise eye; for May's beauty was merely physical; Lilly's shone out from within.

So, having given May all she wanted, scarcely stopping to eat her own morsel, she set off to join her friends. Philip was standing at the door, with his hat on. She saw him before he saw her, and she observed that he was looking somewhat annoyed; but the moment his eye fell upon her, his features lighted up with satisfaction, and hers reflected the joy.

"Ah, Lilly, I'm so glad you're come!" he said. "My mother's just putting on her bonnet for church, and you'll go with her."

"Yes," said Lilly.

"That's a good girl," replied Philip. "There, just go up and tell her so, will you?"

"Yes," answered Lilly; and she entered the house immediately for the purpose; "and Lilly!" cried Philip, calling after her, "tell my mother that, as she has you to go with her, I needn't; I want to go somewhere else."

"Yes," answered Lilly, in a flatter key, for this last addition to his commands let her down at least a semi-tone.

The truth was, that Philip had reckoned on being free that afternoon, by having engaged his cousin, young Dewar, to accompany his mother, which he did not usually do, as they belonged to different denominations. The Rylands were Dissenters, and the others attended the Established Church. But his mother, being somewhat of a bigot, had

objected to the boy's fulfilling his promise. Her health did not admit of her going to church herself, but she insisted on the strict orthodoxy of Peter.

"I can't think where Philip wants to go!" said Mrs. Ryland, whose views on these subjects were rather exclusive also. "He never missed going to church with me before, since we have been in London!"

When they went down stairs, Philip was gone; and they saw no more of him that evening. Lilly would not have believed she could have been so dull in the company of her dear Mrs. Ryland; but the time did pass so heavily! And when she went home there was no Philip to escort her. May was not come in either; and the woman of the house said she had gone out after tea, with the young man who had been there several times during the week. Lilly knew of no young man having been there but Philip; and this set her wondering strangely. However, of

course she should hear all about it when her friend came in. But no such thing! May was dressed *à ravir*, and looked radiant; but she said no word of where she had been, nor by whom accompanied.

For the first time in her life, Lilly felt something like jealousy. She was aware that Philip had called every evening to inquire for her, and that he had sat some time with May; how long, she did not know; as at first she had really been extremely unwell; and latterly, though better, she had, in accordance with May's behest, only risen for a few hours in the middle of the day. But candid and unsuspecting as she was, she could not help being surprised at this sudden intimacy; and still more at the mystery they were making of it. However, she was too much in subjection to May to make any inquiries about what the other did not choose to tell her; so she said nothing. But it influenced her conduct; for she did not call on the Rylands all

the week; and when Sunday came she did not feel courage to go, either. In the mean time, May continued much as usual, only that she was out most evenings, and Lilly saw less of her than she was accustomed to do.

On Sunday morning, May made an elaborate toilet, whilst Lilly cooked the dinner; which being eaten, her friend asked her if she were not going out. Lilly said she did not think she should; whereupon, May, having arranged her bonnet and shawl with the greatest care, took her departure.

Lilly sat at the window and followed her with her eyes to the end of the street, where she lost sight of her. She did not doubt but that she was going to meet Philip, and she had never felt so melancholy before; she was, in fact, oppressed by a new sensation. Her previous sorrows had been of a very different kind to this; and she had been very different at the time they afflicted her. She felt bereft now. There was a cloud rising up betwixt

her and May; she was sure there was; and Philip was forgetting her; and she should lose both. Inexperienced as she was, her woman's instinct enlightened her; Philip had liked her, but May's charms had dazzled and bewitched him; and she must expect no more kind looks, or playful endearments, or gentle squeezes of the arm as he walked home with her at night, when, after laughing at her extravagant encomiums of May, he would say, "Well, I do love you for your good heart after all, Lilly!" And she should never be able to earn this praise any more, for, though she still loved May, she knew that she could never again expatiate on her perfections as she had done; and, least of all, to Philip. Indeed, she felt that she would rather not see him; she was sure he would read her heart in her face, for Lilly had no powers of concealment; she could forbear saying what she felt, but she could not forbear looking it.

But it was very dull sitting at home all the

afternoon with her own sad thoughts, so she put on her bonnet and shawl and went out. It was too late to go to church, so she strolled on towards Cumberland Gate, where she had met Winny Weston formerly, with a sort of vague wish that she might meet her again; not that she cared about Winny particularly; but she was an old acquaintance, and she wanted something to cling to; besides, Winny would talk to her about Philip, and although she could not have spoken of him now to any body who might have divined her feelings, she longed to hear the sound of his name from one who could not.

However, as was to be expected, Winny was not there; and as she found strolling about in the Park alone as dull as staying at home, she directed her steps towards the gate again; walking dreamily on as one without motive to stay or to go. Although it was not the fashionable part of the Park, the turf was dotted with groups of various character:

conscious and unconscious lovers, nurses and children, parents and their progeny, some lounging about, some sitting in the shade of the trees that bordered the gardens; for, although it was autumn, the weather was mild and the sun shone cheerily on the green earth.

Lilly was threading her way amongst them, feeling the more lonely from the contrast of her late happy Sundays, when she suddenly perceived Philip and May Elliott coming towards her, at a right angle. They were also making their way to the gate, but from a different direction, and they were very near before each observed the other. Lilly's heart was in her throat; but, before she had time to think what she should do, they had turned away and passed her. They had both seen her, for there was so little distance between them, that she was fully sensible of the effect her sudden apparition had produced. Philip was startled, and had instinctively made a movement towards her; but May had drawn

him away, and he had turned his face from Lilly and yielded to the charmer.

What a bitter moment it was! Philip who, previously to the last fortnight, had been so kind to her! nay, so loving! For, although he had never mentioned the word *love*, and though the humble Lilly had scarcely dared to embody the thought that he entertained such a sentiment for her, yet she had felt it and pastured on it in her innermost soul. The unconscious consciousness had wrapped her around like the sweet airs of Heaven, comforting, and cheering, and intoxicating her with a bounding joy, that, though untold and unanalyzed, made her young heart leap with delight. And now he turned his face from her and would not see her; and May, the idolized May, was the cause and abettor of his dereliction. "Perhaps it was because she was so shabbily dressed!" May was attired in the height of the fashion; and Lilly's faded gingham and coarse straw bonnet, which

had delighted herself so much when they were new, were certainly but sorry companions for the lilac silk and Bond Street shawl. But Philip had been very well contented to take her, hanging on his arm, to church in no better habiliments; and May knew very well why she *had* no better.

But they had turned away and were gone; so Lilly with a grieved heart pursued her path; and now a wish arose in her breast to go to Mrs. Ryland. She felt a yearning love towards her; she fancied that she too must feel deserted, and that there would be a silent sympathy between them. But would it be silent? What if Mrs. Ryland asked her if she had seen Philip. She could not say *no;* and her instinct told her that to say *yes* would be betraying him. She was sure that he did not tell his mother with whom he was passing the many hours he was away from her, and therefore *she* must not tell; and, since she must not tell, she must not go there;

so she went home; and as she shrank from seeing May, she took care to be in bed before she returned.

On the following morning, they went together as usual to their work; but May's manner towards her was now wholly changed. She made no observation on the occurrences of the preceding day; indeed, she scarcely spoke to her at all; and during the remainder of the week, she maintained the same cold and distant demeanour. A spectator would have imagined that Lilly had given her some heavy offence — the offence was, that she was in her way. Can there be a worse? For that offence how many a one has died — man and woman too!

CHAPTER XII.

LILLY'S FAITH IN DANGER.

Amongst the persons employed at Mrs. Knox's was a very poor girl, called Betsy Barton. She was not used as a worker, except in cases of great exigency; commonly, her office was to carry to the customers at night the articles purchased in the course of the day. She was a plain, coarse, shock-headed child, with black hair, and black eyes as sharp as needles, very poorly clad, and with hands, into the cracks and crevices of which the dirt had made such a lodgment, that no washing could by any possibility ever extract it. Her parents were the poorest of the poor, and from her earliest childhood, till now that she was twelve years old, Bet, as she was commonly

called, had been obliged to earn her own bread —or go without; and, much to her credit, she had contrived to avoid the latter unpleasant alternative.

Great natural energy and acuteness, combined with a healthy frame, had enabled her to struggle through the sea of troubles and difficulties that environed her; and though, like Lilly, her work had been of the hardest, yet, as it had been very various, and she had been thrown much upon the resources of her own wits, they had been rather sharpened than blunted by the process. She had been so accustomed to go of messages, that she was acquainted with every street and lane in London, and knew where every body lived; and she was so trustworthy, that nothing committed to her care had ever failed to reach its destination. On the whole, Bet was rather a favourite with the establishment; and they had latterly had occasion to give her an evidence of their good will.

Bet had arrived at Mrs. Knox's one day in a state of very unusual disorder. She was without the old bonnet and shawl that she ordinarily wore; her head looked as if it had been drawn through a furze-bush; her eyes were red, and the hard, fixed, brick-dust coloured cheeks were variegated with white. On inquiring the cause of all this discomposure, it appeared that her father, who was a journeyman bricklayer, had been killed by falling from a ladder, and that this calamity would necessarily involve a great increase of poverty and distress to the family. She had, moreover, a little brother very ill, and in order to procure him some medicine Bet had parted with her bonnet and shawl to a girl for sixpence; it was certainly as much as they were worth—but, as she had no means of replacing them, the loss was considerable to her.

This circumstance chanced to occur at a time that May Elliott happened to have a little money, and her good nature led her to

present Bet with five shillings, and an old bonnet and shawl of her own; whilst she moreover suggested that there should be a general subscription for the benefit of this poor family. The young people acceded to the proposal, and each put her hand in her pocket; some drew out half-a-crown; others, with lower wages, blushingly laid a shilling on the table. But Lilly gave nothing; for she had nothing to give. May, seeing this, subscribed for her, and of course obtained the credit of extraordinary liberality, whilst every body wondered what Lilly could do with her wages; for she was known to have no friends needing her assistance—and her toilet bore witness to her spending nothing on dress.

May heard all the comments lavished on the apparent parsimony of her friend, but her generosity did not carry her so far as to exculpate her, because she must have done that at her own expense; so Lilly remained under the imputation of withholding the bounty

that others, no better off than herself, had bestowed, whilst May rose twenty per cent in every body's estimation. As for Bet, who had witnessed the whole scene, her gratitude knew no bounds; and from this time she became May's sworn slave and serf — for there was a wild energy in the girl's nature, that, untutored as she was, rendered her passions, when they were awakened, as intense as those of a savage.

It was but a few weeks after this, that Mrs. Knox, with rather an excited air, entered the work-room, where Bet was employed at the time, to make inquiries concerning a box which she had been charged to deliver on the previous Saturday evening, at the house of a Mrs. Wilmot.

"I took it," answered Bet.

"Took it! Yes; but what did you do with the blond fall that was in it?"

"Was the blond fall to go there?" inquired Bet.

"To be sure it was!" answered Mrs. Knox. "What did you do with it?"

"I don't think it was in that box!" said the girl.

"Don't tell me that!" returned Mrs. Knox, "when I put it in with my own hands. It was at the bottom of the box, in a bit of silver paper."

"The maid took the things out of the box —I didn't," answered Bet.

"Well, and did she take that out? Mrs. Wilmot positively declares it never came."

"I didn't see it," answered the other.

"But what became of it?" insisted Mrs. Knox—"that's what I want to know. You could not have dropped it out without dropping out the bonnet; besides, there was a string tied round the box!"

Bet stood silently looking at Mrs. Knox, with a firm and fearless countenance, that betrayed no consciousness of having done wrong;

but she made no answer to this last interrogation.

"I say, I want to know what became of it?" repeated the lady. "That fall was worth three guineas; and that I put it into the box myself I am positively certain. Where is it?"

"I don't know," answered Bet.

"You don't know!" reiterated Mrs. Knox, with rising passion; "what do you mean by '*I don't know?*' Don't you know that I gave it you?"

"Yes," replied Bet.

"Then where is it?"

"I don't know," reiterated the girl.

"Did you lose it?"

"No," said Bet.

"This is very extraordinary!" exclaimed Mrs. Knox. "You know I gave it you, and you did not lose it, and yet you can't tell where it is. Did you see Mrs. Wilmot's maid take it out of the box?"

"No," answered Bet.

"Did you see it when she was taking out the bonnet?"

"No."

"Then you must have opened the box before you got there: for I am as positive that I put it in, as I am that I am standing here!"

"No, I didn't open it," answered Bet, stoutly.

"There's some mystery in this," observed Mrs. Knox; "and if you don't choose to tell me what it is, you must take the consequences. I have always believed you honest, and though I can't afford to lose three guineas, I should be more likely to forgive you for telling me the truth, than for standing there looking in my face in that way and telling me you don't know. Do any of you know anything about the fall for Mrs. Wilmot's bonnet?" said Mrs. Knox, turning towards the table, and addressing the young people, who, one and all, lifted

their eyes from their work and answered, "*No.*"

But amongst these, there was one *No* of a totally different character to the others; that was Lilly's: she looked up and moved her lips, but her face was observed to be very much flushed, and her *No* was inaudible.

"Do *you* know anything about it, Miss Dawson?" inquired Mrs. Knox, observing her confusion, as she ran her eyes round the table and perused the different faces.

"Lilly must have left some time before you sent away the boxes," observed May; "hadn't you, Lilly?"

"Yes," replied Lilly.

"She had cut her thumb, if you recollect, and you told her that as she couldn't work she needn't stay," remarked May.

"Very true—I remember—that was Saturday," returned Mrs. Knox. "But what *is* become of this fall? That is what I want to know."

But Bet either could not or would not tell; and the final conclusion arrived at was, that the distress of her friends had overcome her honesty. The consequence was, that she was dismissed from her place—a cruel misfortune to herself and her family, especially as the reflection on her character was likely to incapacitate her for another.

No words can possibly describe the strange confusion of Lilly's mind during the course of this examination and after it. When Mrs. Knox had commenced her inquiries respecting the missing article, she had raised her eyes to May's face, fully prepared to hear her say that she knew where it was; but May had continued diligently pinning flowers into a bonnet she was finishing, without taking the slightest apparent notice of the question. It was therefore not for Lilly, in her subordinate situation, to speak; and she waited, every moment getting more anxious and more puz-

zled; nor did anything occur to clear up her difficulty.

Bet was dismissed, and went forthwith, without making any representations or expostulations; and naturally the occurrence led to a great deal of discussion at the worktable. Lilly said nothing, and May little—except that she believed the girl was perfectly honest; and that she dare say she had met with some accident.

Now, the truth of the matter was this: Bet had been charged with two boxes on that Saturday night; one was for Mrs. Wilmot, and the other contained a new bonnet of May Elliott's. Just as Bet was starting, Mrs. Knox, who had forgotten the fall, ran into the shop, hastily raised the cover of the box the girl had in her hand at the moment, and, lifting up the bonnet, laid the parcel under it. Of this second other box she knew nothing, that being May's private concern; and both bonnets

being of straw, and the shop not lighted, she had in her haste not remarked the difference.

Lilly knew nothing whatever about all this; but she had been at home, when the girl had brought May's bonnet, and had seen her lay both that and the parcel on the table. May was out at the time; but, when she came in, she had carried both articles into her bedroom, without making any observation on the occurrence, and Lilly had thought no more of the matter; but, having seen a corner of the blond protruding from the paper, she now felt assured that Bet had left the fall with May's bonnet, instead of with the other. But Bet must have known this as well as she did, whilst May could not have forgotten the circumstance. Why they did not each declare the truth, she could not conceive.

The reason May did not declare it was that she felt it was too late. It was now Thursday; she might have brought back the fall on Monday morning, with a perfectly

good grace; but, after so many days, it was difficult to account for not having produced it before. The reason Bet did not speak out was, that, though but a child, her manner of life had shown her a great deal of a certain part of the world, and that not the best. Her parents were harmless, ignorant people; and she had no vanities, no desires to tempt her to do wrong; but she had been in situations where she had witnessed plenty of dishonesty; and it had neither shocked nor surprised her —it was a way of life like another.

When therefore she perceived that May did not own to the possession of the blond, she comprehended at once that she had her own reasons for not doing so; and her vivid gratitude kept her silent. She saw clearly that to have said where she left it, would have been to accuse her benefactress. She had witnessed many little things that were not strictly right, even at Mrs. Knox's; and her mind was too much familiarized to small

peculations to be astonished or disturbed at the present event, further than as it affected her own prosperity; and this she sacrificed. Had May not been present at the examination, she would have probably declared the truth at once — but there she sat; and Bet's savage allegiance closed her lips.

Now, with respect to May's retaining the blond fall, it had been, in the first instance, an action wholly unpremeditated. She had carried it into her room with her bonnet, supposing the paper to contain some washed lace of her own. When she opened the parcel and perceived what it was, she comprehended that it had been put into her box by mistake; and she intended to take it back, when she went to work on Monday.

May's favourite diversion on a Sunday morning before church time was to figure before the glass, trying on her finery, dressing her beautiful hair, and studying the becoming; and when she put on her new bonnet, she

could not forbear trying the effect of the fall. How well it looked, and how much she wished it was hers! It was indeed an article of dress she had often wished for. She had half a mind to wear it that afternoon; only the possibility of meeting any of the Knox establishment deterred her. Mr. and Mrs. Knox usually went out of town on Sundays, but the girls might recognise it and "peach;" so she forbore, and laid it in one of her drawers.

On Monday morning, she forgot it at the moment of starting; her head being, at that particular period, very much occupied with the growing interest of her acquaintance with Philip. When she recollected that she had left it behind, she was half way to her destination, and had no time to return. The human mind is very subtle, and motives are sometimes scarcely recognisable to those whom they are influencing; for, although May had formed no design of retaining the

lace, there must have been some latent reason for her not mentioning the subject to Mrs. Knox immediately, which she did not, and the day elapsed without any allusion to it.

"*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*," as the French proverb says; but, unfortunately, the cost of this first step is apt to be considerable; and it was so in the present instance; for the first day passed in silence rendered the production of the fall on the next somewhat difficult. Still, it was practicable; but by this time certain visions had arisen in May's mind of the possibility of this white blond fall being converted into a black one, by the aid of a dyer—in which case it would not be so easily recognisable; so Tuesday and Wednesday passed, and still nothing was said of it.

Though every day augmented the difficulty, a restitution was yet possible, had the movement originated with herself; but, when the inquiry came suddenly upon her, she felt that

she could not have owned to the possession of the lace without betraying her guilt in her countenance. When the examination commenced, she trusted that Bet might have forgotten where she had left it; and, when it terminated, she thought that was the case; for, incapable herself of the generous motive that had actuated the girl, she did not suspect it in another.

As for Lilly, May was not sure that she knew anything about it, till she observed her confusion on being appealed to; but Lilly she knew would not speak where she was silent. Only to arrest further question, which might have rendered the embarrassment more evident, she diverted inquiry from her by mentioning that she must have left work early, on that Saturday; and so could know nothing of the boxes nor of their contents.

Thus, the danger was averted for the moment; but May was far from feeling easy on

the subject. Bet might come to her recollection, or Mrs. Knox might learn from some accidental observation that the girl had left the house with two boxes on that evening. She wished sincerely that she had returned it at first; for she doubted now whether she could ever venture to wear it, even though disguised by the dyer.

Then she was annoyed that Lilly should be aware of her dishonesty. She felt pretty sure she would not betray her to Mrs. Knox—but might she not to Philip? Besides, the mortification of feeling herself in the power of one she considered so much her inferior wounded her exceedingly.

Altogether, May was a very considerable sufferer by this indirect experiment in the art of illegal appropriation; and, added to this, she really felt extremely sorry for poor Bet.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHO MR. CROPLEY WAS, AND WHAT HE DID FOR MAY.

In the mean while, Philip and May had been making daily progress in their acquaintance, and every moment each had at command was bestowed on the other.

Philip was just at that age when a man is extremely liable to be caught in the snares of a woman a little older than himself. At this period, boys are aspiring to be men, but, wanting courage, confidence, and experience, they are arrested in their career by *mauvaise honte*, and are consequently subject to a long train of mortifications. A youth at that age is like an actor, full of ambition that, having sublime conceptions of the character he is to fill, finds, when he steps upon the boards, that

the sight of the audience has disabled him for its representation. A woman, at the same period, is much more advantageously placed; her part is to be quiet and wait; and her *mauvaise honte* takes the graceful name of modesty. An accomplished, well-bred man, knows how to accommodate himself to this phase of femininity; and the society of such gradually dissipates the confusion and forms the manners. But, when the shy boy and the shy girl come together, the situation of the former is extremely painful. She can do nothing towards helping him to overcome his difficulties; on the contrary, she adds to them the amount of her own.

Then, when girls are older, they are still looking upwards; they are aspiring to the notice of some man who has black *moustaches* or an estate; and if a youth in his teens addresses them, they snub him without mercy.

This is the usual position of the sexes, in

regard to each other, during a certain period; but, now and then, there is an exception; and there is no intoxication greater than that of a youth who finds himself the object of regard to a woman whom he would never have dared to address, had she not smoothed the way for him. Gratitude, pride, and the sense of relief from the nightmare that oppressed him, all swell the tide of his passion; and his love for her is augmented by the whole sum of his love for himself.

In Philip Ryland's case, to all the weight of the above influences was to be added those of the excitements of wonder and surprise. Till he came in contact with her, he had not conceived of such a woman as May Elliott—perhaps the women he saw whirling through the streets in gilded equipages, or going in feathers and trains to St. James's, might be like her—but, within his own sphere, he could not have dreamt of such a prodigy: and that this bewitching creature should condescend to

love him, awakened in him a ravishing joy that seemed beyond this world.

For Lilly he had felt the calm love of a brother, that, from the contemplation of her ingenuous, candid, devoted nature, was gradually ripening into something more tender: but for May his passion burst into full flower at once, the moment the sun of her favour shone upon it. To walk with her of an evening, pressing with eager grasp the hand that was passed under his arm; to look in her eyes, and hear her, a dozen times in an hour, respond to the as oft-repeated question, "May, do you love me?" seemed a foretaste of all heavenly joys; and for them he forgot not only poor Lilly, but almost his mother and his business too. Still, the thought of these at times gave him great pain. Old Rachel had been the tenderest of mothers to him, and her affections were centred in him with as much devotion as his were in May. Well organized, and, in his childhood, well

trained and nurtured, he had never given her a moment's uneasiness till now; but, since his acquaintance with May, it was easy to read in her eyes how she was searching into his for the key to his mystery; which he dared not give her—he could hardly tell why; but his instinct forbade him. He felt that she could neither understand May nor his passion for her; and that the disclosure of his engagement would be the signal for a struggle that he dreaded to encounter.

He had other troubles, too. The small stipend he received was not sufficient to allow him to dress in a manner conformably to his new ideas; nor did it enable him to offer his mistress such little gallantries as he saw she expected. But he could not hope for so much happiness without alloy; and that May should love him, in spite of all these disadvantages, was only the greater proof of the sterling reality of her affection.

May, meanwhile, had her troubles, too.

Not to mention the unpleasant affair alluded to in the last chapter, and her growing aversion to Lilly, she was also distressed for money, and hourly dreading being called on for what she could not pay. If Philip had but been rich, he would have been perfect; but his poverty really annoyed her; and sometimes she could not forbear making him feel it. But, just as her difficulties were threatening to get the upper hand of her devices, an unexpected re-enforcement came to her aid.

The suit carried on by General Markham against Colonel Adams, which amounted to nothing more than an embargo on the property, which the other could not take off for want of money, was not conducted by Mr. Treadgold, who managed his affairs in general, but by a person of the name of Cropley, whose notions of right and wrong were anything in the world but precise. To him, the justice of a cause he took in hand was so far from being

an object, that he rather preferred one in which the whole exercise of his scheming intellect was required to make out a case at all. He considered everything fair in law; and, if he could not obtain a verdict for his client, he prided himself on the ingenuity with which he had frequently succeeded in preventing the successful suitor deriving any benefit from his failure. Thus it was in the present instance; but, for this fatal and unprincipled ingenuity, Colonel Adams and his family would not have been pining for ten or twelve years in poverty and disappointment.

Born to pride and splendour, nursed into selfishness and ill-temper, and educated into habits of controlling everybody within the sphere of his influence, except himself, General Markham had looked upon his sister, who was several years his junior, as an intruder in the family, and had treated her accordingly. Whilst she lived, he had opposed and oppressed

her; and, after she died, he persecuted her husband more out of hatred than avarice; for he could not get the fortune himself; but, to keep his enemy out of it was a great consolation. He was, in short, an aristocratic Luke; the one took lives, whilst the other broke hearts; it was merely the accident of fortune that caused their malice to take different directions.

It was just whilst suffering under the pangs of his disappointed malice, when the first verdict was given in favour of Colonel Adams, that Mr. Cropley came to his aid. They had not been previously acquainted; for Mr. Treadgold had conducted the first suit, which was considered a legitimate one enough; it being the general opinion that the wording of the will was obscure; and that, in fact, the old nabob never had intended the fortune to go out of the family. On learning the General's vexation, Mr. Cropley thought he saw an opening for himself; and, accordingly, he

presented himself before the great man, and disclosed his plan.

At the time the Hastings was lost, it was universally understood that every soul on board had perished. Colonel and Mrs. Adams were in India; the General, if he even knew the child had been in the ship, had felt no interest in her fate; so that no especial inquiries had been made on the spot; and no suspicion that she had survived existed in any quarter. But Mr. Cropley saw at once that her death remained legally problematical, and on this he built his hopes. A better client for his purpose than the General he could not have found. The long indulgence of violent temper and malignant passions, partly consequent on, and partly promoted by, an unfortunate physical constitution, had rendered him nearly insane; indeed, he was as reckless of consequences, and as indifferent to honour and principle in the attainment of his ends, and the gratification of his revenge, when

once his fury was excited, as if he had been quite so.

Owing to the inability of Colonel Adams effectively to maintain the Chancery suit, it would have been generally at a stand still, had not that state of quiescence been extremely adverse to the interests of Mr. Cropley. As far as the court itself was concerned, no money being ever demanded of the Accountant-General, the thing might have remained in *statu quo* till the day of judgment; but Mr. Cropley had his annual bill of costs to look to; and something must be done to cover, at least, a couple of folio sheets. Accordingly, when he had no other opponent, it was his custom to fill that part himself; and regularly, twice or thrice every year, he would present himself before the General with a face of importance, to tell him, that some friend of the Colonel's had taken up the affair, and was about to move the court, or file a bill; and that they must be stirring, and so forth;

and the General, who had not patience to read the papers he laid before him, believed, and paid.

As this game had now been played several years, and as, in fact, the suit *was* at a stand still, Colonel Adams having no money to spend upon it, it became annually a matter of greater difficulty to Cropley to maintain his influence with the General, or to make out a handsome bill at Christmas; added to which, he feared that, for want of opposition, his patron might become indifferent on the subject; and that this important source of profit, which he considered himself entitled to look upon as part of his income, might fail him altogether. Unbounded, therefore, was his satisfaction, when, from some hint that reached him, he found an excuse for riding over one day to the General, and telling him, with a very long face, that Colonel Adams was about to procure an order that the girl, Isabel Adams, should be produced in court, "which

will dish us entirely," said he; "unless we could get somebody to personate her."

"Why," said the General, "I would certainly rather anybody had the fortune than that fellow, Adams; but it would be a most provoking thing to give it to an impostor, too!"

"There's no danger of that," said Cropley. "The other party will take care we don't give her the fortune. No; all that is to be gained by the stratagem is delay. They will not admit that the girl we produce is the real Isabel Adams; but how are they to prove she is not?"

"But, could anybody be trusted to act the part?" inquired the General.

"Why, I think I know a girl that would do it for a couple of hundred pounds or so;" said Cropley. "She's a little past the age, but she looks young, and is up to anything."

In this description, Cropley had May Elliott, whom he had known from her childhood, in

his eye; not that he thought it might be absolutely necessary ever to mention the subject to her at all; and still less did he intend to give her the two hundred pounds; but it was advisable to have some one in view, and she was the most likely person for his purpose that he was acquainted with.

But the freaks of malice and idleness are unaccountable; the idea of the pain and vexation this substitution would occasion his adversary was so gratifying to the General, that he entered warmly into the plot; declared his readiness to pay down the two hundred pounds, and desired the girl might be sought for, and instructed in her part without delay; and Cropley, after putting the thing off as long as he could, at length found it advisable to speak to May Elliott on the subject; lest by some strange chance or caprice his patron should require to see the girl himself.

By this time, however, he had mislaid the

letter in which Giles had sent him her address, and he now wrote to him requesting it again. But Giles, who had quitted town, had also forgotten the number of the house she lodged at; added to which, she might have removed in the interval; so he wrote to his son George, who was then apprenticed to a shoemaker in London, desiring him to inquire in such a street for Miss Elliott, and if she had moved to ascertain whither she had gone.

The answer to this letter contained a piece of intelligence that was much more welcome than the number of May's lodging. "Miss Elliott lives at No. 2," said George, "and who should I see there when I called, but Lilly Dawson. I knew her directly; but she did not know me, as I suppose I am so much bigger than when she saw me. She is very much altered too; but I asked the woman that opened the door if that girl's name wasn't Lilly Dawson, and she said it was; so I'm sure it was she."

On receiving the necessary information, Cropley took the earliest opportunity of calling when he went to London, and, without mentioning names, he told May what might be required of her. He was under no apprehension of shocking her principles, which he rightly judged accessible to a bribe. She would probably never be wanted; all that was required of her was, that she should be ready to say whatever he told her, should he have occasion to call upon her.

"But what am I to have for doing this?" inquired May.

"That will depend on what we demand of you," returned Mr. Cropley.

But May pressed for a retaining fee; she said she was badly off, and that she would rather have a little money in hand, than the promise of a much larger sum; and Cropley, willing to keep well with a woman who might do him future service, ended by giving her twenty pounds; and one of the first uses she

resolved to make of it, was to change her lodging; for by doing this she would be able to shake off Lilly. To turn her poor companion out of doors was a step that neither accorded with her character nor her interests; it was not her nature to do harsh things—at least, when she did them under a sufficiently strong incentive, it was rather by stratagem than by open violence. She preferred to spare her own feelings as well as those of the person who was to suffer.

Still, she was perplexed; she would not that Philip should think her unkind to his old favourite; and she would not, on any account, that complaints should reach Mrs. Ryland. She ardently wished Lilly could be provided for at a distance; and she began to form a project of persuading her to quit Mrs. Knox's, or of getting her discharged.

It was scarcely a surprise to Lilly, though a pang shot through her heart, when May first hinted to her that they must part. She had

foreseen that this must happen; but without some sudden impulse to urge her into action, she was incapable of making the first movement towards the separation herself.

None but those of a like nature to Lilly's can tell, what a rending of the soul it is, when the bonds that bind the lover to the loved are rudely snapped; and the poor heart is sent adrift on the dark, cold ocean of indifference, with not one friendly harbour to cast anchor in.

CHAPTER XIV.

PHILIP IN TROUBLE, AND A FEW WORDS ON AN OLD SUBJECT.

"What shall you do?" inquired May.

"I don't know," replied Lilly, with a pale cheek and subdued voice.

"Do you mean to stay at Mrs. Knox's?" asked May, in a tone implying the expectation that she would not stay.

"I suppose so," replied the other; and at that question she *was* surprised; for she did not yet understand the hardness of selfishness; nor how obnoxious she had herself become.

May was silent for a minute or two, but her countenance was unrelenting when she rejoined, "If you mean to remain there, you'll have to look for a lodging for yourself, you know;" a difficulty which, to the penniless and

inexperienced girl, she was aware would appear gigantic.

Lilly could scarcely tell what made her say it, but she answered, that she "could ask Mrs. Ryland what she should do."

The first effect of this rash communication on her auditor was to bring the colour to her cheeks and make her eyes flash fire; but, as the flush subsided, she became paler than she was before.

"You had better not be in a hurry to do that," she said, raising her eyes to Lilly's face and compressing her lips, with an expression that seemed to say, "I understand the threat." "*I'll* look for a lodging for you."

Lilly coloured, but she had no courage to assert her own rights further; the impulse was not strong enough; her veneration and not yet wholly extinguished love for May forming a counteracting force to her jealousy, distrust, and sense of wrong.

Upwards of a month had now elapsed, since

she had seen Philip and his mother, except on the occasion of one accidental meeting in the street, when he looked ill at ease whilst trying to address her with his former familiarity and kindness; and Mrs. Ryland had asked what she did with herself on Sundays, that she never went to see them. Lilly blushed, cast a confused look at Philip, and saying she was coming soon, abruptly broke away from them, which the moment after she deeply regretted. And she had reason to do so; for Mrs. Ryland, unable to comprehend this change in her manner, in conjunction with her continued absence, thought it indicated nothing good on the part of Lilly; and being a very rigid person in her notions, she was easily repelled by any appearance of an aberration from the straight course. An idea, too, glanced through her mind, extremely unfavourable to her former favourite. The alteration observable in Lilly's habits and proceedings was nearly simultaneous with a similar change in those of Philip;

and as the young people had been extremely intimate and apparently fond of each other, she could not help combining the two circumstances, very much to the disadvantage of Lilly. So that the parting had been as cold on one side as it was abrupt on the other; and Mrs. Ryland had made no further advances towards a better understanding.

Thus, poor Lilly was cast out on all sides; she, who had lately thought herself so happy and so rich in friends!

One evening, however, as she was coming home from her work, she suddenly met Philip at the corner of a street. He was alone; and, with his hat over his eyes and his hands in his pockets, he was lounging along the pavement, with what struck her as an air of despondence. Had he looked gay and happy, she would have probably passed on with a slight recognition; as it was, she instinctively paused, and he stopped.

"Ah, Lilly, is it you?" said he; too much

occupied at that moment with a trouble of his own, to think of her feelings or opinions of his conduct; and therefore not exhibiting the confusion he had lately evinced when they met. Nay, he even turned back with her, and walked by her side; but still slowly, despondently, and silently.

"How's Mrs. Ryland?" asked Lilly, who, having accommodated her pace to his, felt the silence awkward.

"My mother? Oh, my mother's well—quite well. And how are you, Lilly?"

"I am very well," answered she.

"So you are going to leave Mrs. Knox's?" said he; not speaking with interest or curiosity; but as of a matter already decided, and of slight import.

Lilly would naturally have said, "No, I am not;" for in fact she had no such intention; but she remembered what May had said, and, taken by surprise, she felt as if this were not a question, but an announcement of what

must be ; a sort of proclamation of May's high behest; and, setting apart the influence of habit, and of the impetuous will over the gentler nature, May's wishes in this instance she well knew would be omnipotent; for, as she was a very important person in Mrs. Knox's show-room, and Lilly of no importance whatever in any department, a word from the stronger would insure the dismissal of the weaker member.

" Well, Lilly," said he, " I hope you'll be happy, wherever you go ; for I believe you're a good-hearted girl as ever lived. Perhaps, you may not care much for my opinion," he added, with a half smile ; " but, you know, we're old friends, Lilly ; and I've reason to know you better than most people."

This was a sort of sad, faint echo of the really serious, but, affectedly, jocular commendations he used to bestow upon her; and yet Philip had never been more sincere in the expressed opinion than he was at that moment.

His nascent love for her was extinguished by the blaze of his intoxicating passion for May, as a coal fire is dimmed by the noonday sun; and he had latterly avoided her, because he was conscious of this, and because he could not doubt that she was conscious of it too; nor did he doubt that she suffered from the change. But there was a tender sentiment towards her lingering at the bottom of his heart still; and he was by no means insensible to the instinctive delicacy and generosity, that had not only prevented her from speaking to his mother of his intimacy with May and his neglect of herself; but had also caused her to discontinue her visits.

But Lilly could say nothing to this; she only blushed and was silent. She was not experienced enough in the tactics of her sex to draw on an explanation from this favourable opening for one; so they walked on for another five minutes without a word. She half fancied there was something he desired to say to her—perhaps, he wished to speak of

May! She hoped he would not, for she could not praise May now as she had always done before when her name was mentioned; not so much because her opinion of her friend was changed, as because her own feelings would not allow her. She would have been blind to May's faults, or have loved her in spite of them: but she was jealous; and although the beauty and fascinations of this Circe seemed to her more potent than ever, for she witnessed their effects and magnified their power by her appreciation of what they had won from her, yet she could lift up her voice no more to sing the praises of those fatal charms.

Presently, a carriage passed with two footmen, whilst the lamps threw their glare on the brilliant figures within.

"What a strange world this is!" said he.

"Why?" asked Lilly, who was little given to moralize on affairs in general; and as to the question of what sort of a world

it was, it was one that had never disturbed her.

"I mean, how different people's situation in life is," said he.

"Yes," answered Lilly; "there's rich and poor."

"Do you ever wish to be rich, Lilly?" said he.

"No," replied she; "I never thought about it; it would be no use."

"But that don't prevent one wishing for a thing. I wish it did. Can you help wishing for a thing because it's no use?"

"I don't know," replied Lilly; "only I never thought of wishing to be rich."

"So much the better for you, Lilly," said he: and then he relapsed into silence again.

"How different he is to what he used to be?" thought Lilly; and she contrasted in her mind their merry walks and hearty laughs, with this lagging, aimless way of dragging himself along; and this disjointed talk. It

was evident he was quite out of tune about something; but Lilly was too inexperienced in affairs of this nature to form any idea of what that something could be. It was in fact nothing more than a slight disappointment with respect to May. She was in the habit of walking with him every evening; but on the one in question an engagement had deprived him of her company. An acquaintance of Mrs. Knox's had given her two tickets for the pit of the Opera, and she had offered one to May; asking her at the same time if she could find any cavalier to accompany them. May said she could; never doubting that Philip would delightedly avail himself of the opportunity. And so he would have done, could he have commanded the money; but there was no ticket to be had under half-a-guinea, which was a sum he was not yet sufficiently mad to spend for such a purpose. Besides, he had it not; and the early habits and instructions of his youth were not so entirely obliterated as

to allow him to borrow it of his mother or aunt under a false pretence.

But May could not understand such scruples, and had tossed her head with an "Oh, very well, if you don't wish to go, there are others that do!" And Philip had watched her departure, and had seen her, elegantly dressed, handed into the coach by a young man attired in a much more fashionable costume than he could boast of possessing. So that he had not only the mortification of not being able to accompany the mistress of his affections, but he was, moreover, jealous of the fortunate man that supplied his place. Added to this, he was suffering from a vexatious consciousness of his own poverty, a circumstance which till very lately had never given him any pain, but which he had now begun to look upon as a great evil.

In the intoxication of his early acquaintance with May, and the surprise and gratification of his vanity at finding himself an object of

interest to so brilliant a beauty, he had thought of no difficulties, no impediments — love, the universal leveller, seemed to have smoothed them all. But several late circumstances had disclosed to him how much his happiness would be endangered by his want of means. How many things that the lover of so elegant a person should be able to do, were out of his power! He too should be fashionably dressed. His respectable suit of sables made by a country tailor was of a very different cut to the mulberry coat with basket buttons, and the pale canary-coloured waistcoat, of the happy Adonis who was at that moment, probably, brushing May's cheek with his perfumed curls, in the pit of the Opera! Then how could he accompany her to the play, or pay for her coaches, or present her with appropriate testimonies of his love? And, above all, how could he dare to ask her hand, or expect her to condescend to such appliances as he could offer? It was impossible!

She must inevitably despise so shabby a fellow!

And yet, all this while, Philip, from this besetting weakness of mankind, which makes almost every body value themselves and other people according to what they *have*, and not according to what they *are*, was entirely mistaken in his estimate of his position in respect to May. She was, in fact, as much captivated by him as he was by her; only being older and more sophisticated, she had taken the *dessus;* and made him her stringed instrument instead of her lord. If he were fascinated by her beauty and brilliance, and superficial virtues, she was no less so by his really handsome, manly person and genuine nature. He was a new character to her, and not the less irresistible for being so unlike herself and her previous admirers. She had never known before what it was to possess the ardent love of an honest heart; and though in the commencement of the acquaintance she

had angled merely to catch him, she had ended by being caught herself; and if Philip, instead of succumbing to *her* nature, had been man enough to assert his own, he might and would have been her master; as it was, she was his.

And it is constantly thus in real life; these are the women that, by ruling men, have ruled empires. The true and noble woman disdains to rule, either as wife or mistress; she seeks a lord and not a slave. Her love must look ever upwards; and, except in the maternal relation, there can be no true love, from woman to man, that does not. There is another kind of woman that rules men too; the cold, calm, unexcitable, and ever-self-possessed; the woman that never forgets *herself*. We never saw such a one as a wife, that the husband was not, more or less, the subject of her will. In both instances, an intense selfishness is the predominant principle; in the first, combined with vanity; and in the second,

with that, and a large portion of self-esteem, into the bargain.

In a true woman—and by a *true woman* we mean one in whom the nature of her sex is the most completely developed—candour will be the distinctive attribute; inasmuch as it is the distinctive attribute of the intuitive life which in her must prevail: but it is remarkable that these women, the true archetypes of their sex, are exactly those who have the least influence over men in general; for, to understand and appreciate such a woman, a man must be as noble and candid as herself. He must have *insight*—which few men have, for intellect does not give it; and, in the present stage of civilization, it is certain that men are much more governed by the vices and artifices of women than by their virtues. There is plenty of power to be had by bad means—by what are frequently called "the legitimate arms of the sex." Fie! we never see the *manège* and the dexterities by which

so many women retain their influence over their husbands, without feeling infinitely more contempt for her successful cunning, than we do for the poor spiritless unresisting victim of a brute, who may be living next door.

The fact is, that few men know anything of woman's true nature—how should they? for what is more rare than a thoroughly genuine woman? And how are women answerable for this, when it has been for ages the business of society not only to repress and extinguish that nature wherever it appeared, but to educate its daughters out of it from their cradles; so that at this moment there can scarcely exist in any civilized country a woman in whom the germ has had so much vitality as to have resisted the external influences exerted to repress or pervert it, who does not feel herself in an ungenial atmosphere.

The usual light in which woman is considered is as of a being with a different physical organization to man; but in all other

respects as of similar, but inferior, endowments—the essential distinctions, when observed, being set down to the account of eccentricity and aberration: and the education bestowed upon her has been in conformity with this view; that is, it has been, as compared with that bestowed on the other sex, an inferior sample of the same article—bad enough in the best—with a clumsy attempt to compensate for its inferiority by a few meretricious accomplishments. We humbly confess to a shrinking antipathy from what is commonly called an "accomplished woman." Let women draw, and sing, and play the harp—these things are good in their way—so are artificial flowers and French jewellery—but if these are their stock in trade—the armour with which they have been prepared to fight their battle and make their way through this life to another—we should think their outfit no more suitable, than we should their wardrobe, if its staple commo-

dities consisted of the above mentioned pretty appurtenances.

Man having thus settled to his own entire satisfaction the question of the weakness and inferiority of woman, and every thing being done that training could do, to produce such results as confirmed his conclusion, it necessarily followed that she was unfit to cope with the world or resist the manifold dangers and temptations that surrounded her; and it was accordingly found necessary to hem her in by decorums and circumscribe her by conventionalities, which altogether precluded her from that self-education by experience which the more active life of man afforded him. Frightened at his own vices and the weakness of the creature to whose keeping he must needs confide his honour and peace, he saw nothing left for it but to turn the world into one large harem; perpetuating woman's slavery by perpetuating her ignorance; and teaching her, whilst he assumed a divine right to de-

spotic sway, that it was the worst of treasons to herself—that is, that it was *unfeminine*—to dispute his claims.

In short, he only discerned two functions for which woman could have been designed; namely, to be the slave of his passions, and the nurse of his babies in swaddling-clothes; and for these purposes, he sought to adapt her—he fitted her "to suckle fools;" and verily he has his reward—for she has done it!

Thus, that the weakness and inferiority which they allege against us really does exist, we fear there is no mistaking. Let any woman to whom circumstances have been more favourable, or who, by the energy of her own will, has found a function for herself; and forced herself out of "the circumscription and confines," that custom had drawn about her, speak honestly the result of her experience and observation, in this respect. How many women could she reckon of her acquaintance, who have ever dared to think for themselves; or

even, if they dared to *think*, would dare to *speak?* How many free souls could she count amongst them?

It is true, there is little real culture amongst men; there are few strong thinkers, and fewer honest ones; but they have still some advantages. If their education has been bad, it has at least been a trifle better than ours. Six hours a day at Latin and Greek are better than six hours a day at worsted-work and embroidery; and time is better spent in acquiring a smattering of mathematics, than in strumming Hook's lessons on a bad pianoforte. Then men have the benefit of rubbing against the world in their progress through it; they have mostly some definite pursuit or profession, within the domain of which they at least know something — and it is much to know something, though, like Walter Scott's companion in the stage coach, it be only about Bend-leather;—and altogether, stunted though they be, they have been enabled to grow into

more vigour, from not being so utterly repressed and stifled by the artificial restrictions and false delicacies they have entwined round the other sex.

It would be a consolation if, amidst all these disadvantages that have been heaped upon them, women could have preserved their candour, their simplicity, their singleness of mind; but they are so artificial, so conventional, so unreal, so afraid of being *themselves!* No wonder! For they have in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred been so frowned out of their individualities when they were young, that they have actually forgotten after what fashion God Almighty made them. Their minds have been compressed by tight stays, like their bodies; they have so entirely lost sight of Nature that they are positively shocked when she meets their view; and as soon as they get children of their own, they set about deforming her; squeezing, pinching, and paring, till, like the Flatheads or the Chinese, they

have reduced their offspring to the true standard of taste and gentility. Wo to any unfortunate little being, who should be found amongst the brood, in whom a strong nature prevailing over art will insist on asserting itself! Its mother will be as much astonished and dismayed as a hen that has hatched a duck's egg. The gods themselves know what an inane and insipid thing this eternal modelling, forming, and finishing, makes of society!

In what we have here said, we are very far from desiring to imply, that we think the intellectual faculty of woman, either in quality or calibre, equal to that of man. On the contrary, we are of opinion that the most intellectual woman that ever lived, be she who she may, has been far inferior in that region to the most intellectual man. This opinion we are aware will be very distasteful to some of the female champions of the cause we are advocating; but it is founded, not only on

the records of the intellectual heroes and heroines of antiquity, but on observations and comparisons, made betwixt some of the most remarkable men and women of the present day. No female intellect that we have ever yet heard or read of exhibits any thing like the breadth, depth, and power of a noble, masculine, (honest) mind—for the degree in which the want of honesty cripples men's minds is past all calculation.

But what we wish to advance is, that, if allowed free scope and fair play, woman would be able to put forth, and make available, equivalent, though different endowments; which now not only lie fallow, but are actually in the process of extinction, from want of exercise; whilst, to most of those in whom the germ yet lives, it is, from the constitution of society and the restrictions placed on the sex, more a curse than a blessing. Nothing can equal the wretchedness of a woman, in whose bosom this lamp is pent, consuming

herself, because not permitted to shed its ray upon the world. The utter hopelessness, the entire inanity of life, the sense of degradation, the wondering wherefore she was made, to bear all this and suffer to no end! Life all holiday, with nothing to do but play! And yet to break through this deadening charm that is flung about her, what "a downright violence and storm of fortune" is most times needed! And how many, from the want of being guided to the true outlet and freer air, rush into perdition to escape it? Not because women of this temperament are vicious; exactly the contrary; they are the least sensual of their sex; but because the living flame within must have something to pasture on. Denied to live their own life, and weave out their own destiny, they become absorbed in that of another; flinging themselves and their affections at the feet, not of a man, but of their own ideal — too often embodied in the form of some worthless idol, no more worthy

of their faith, than the ill-carved stone that the poor Indian worships.

If, as we believe, under no system of training, the intellect of woman would be found as strong as that of man, she is compensated by her intuitions being stronger—if her reason be less majestic, her insight is clearer—where man reasons, she sees. Nature, in short, gave her all that was needful to enable her to fill a noble part in the world's history, if man would but let her play it out; and not treat her like a full-grown baby, to be flattered and spoiled on the one hand, and coerced and restricted on the other, vibrating betwixt royal rule and slavish serfdom. In her childhood, woman is perverted by the ignorance of well-intentioned mothers and governesses, who view her, not as an independent soul, capable of the richest culture, and sent into this world for the purpose of qualifying herself to fulfil high duties here and higher hereafter, but as the appendage of some man, whose fancy she

must first charm by her accomplishments, and to whose humours, for the rest of her life, she must afterwards conform; and it is lamentable to think that the great proportion of books now written on woman's duties, and put into the hands of young people, for their instruction, regard her in no other light. From first to last, she is governed by the pap-spoon and the rod; and whilst, for his own selfish ends, man kneels at her feet and flatters her with mock devotion, he makes laws and enforces customs, that rob her of her free franchise, and of all the rights that God and Nature gave her.[1]

We have frequently of late heard the question asked, "Can woman regenerate society?" Really, we cannot see how that can be, till man regenerates himself. Till he elevates his own standard, it appears next to impossible

[1] It gives us great satisfaction to learn that the women of Berne in Switzerland are at this time petitioning for equal rights; and that one of the American States is about to pass a law, giving females power over their own property.

for woman effectually to elevate hers: for prescription is on his side, might will be right, and he has so much the best of the game, that until by a nobler culture and the awakening of larger sympathies, his eyes are opened to his own injustice and his own loss, any material improvement in the condition of woman seems hopeless.

With all the independence, the freedom, the culture, the equal laws, the introduction into active life and employments, which we crave for woman, we still admit that man, through her heart and her affections, will be her lord; and should be, if he would raise himself to the standard that would entitle him to the fief. There is nothing so elevating to a woman as the love of a truly great and noble man. The worship she pays him, whether it be that of friendship or of love, exalts her mind, and fills her soul with a holy joy; there is nothing so degrading, so crushing to the spirit, as to be the slave of a churl.

When men are better and wiser, they will be more just. When they are noble themselves, they will demand noble women to their wives; and for woman to be noble they will see that she must first be free. That so many amongst them do not desire to be so, is one of the worst symptoms of their condition.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW ONE FALSE STEP ALWAYS LEADS TO MORE.

May saw clearly the influence of Mrs. Ryland over her son—the influence of habit and of a genuine filial respect and affection—and she dreaded it. Her instinct showed her that she was not the wife his mother would accept for him; and although he had never distinctly told her so, she was well aware that their intimacy was carefully kept a secret from her. Lilly was therefore become to her an object of extreme apprehension and distrust. Yet, she knew her so well as to feel a tolerable degree of certainty that she would not betray them; that is, that she would not deliberately do anything that would be painful to Philip or

herself, however provoked. Had she thought differently of her character, she would have treated her differently. She would have tried to win her by kindness and confidence, and sought to bind her by promises; but, as the best dispositions frequently encounter the worst usage, so, in this instance, she presumed on Lilly's gratitude and generosity to abuse them—treating her with coldness and disdain, and only implying her desire for silence with respect to Philip, by the extreme reserve she observed on the subject herself—in short, frowning instead of courting her to secrecy.

Nevertheless, she was not at ease; human nature is fallible; and even Lilly's devotion and generous forbearance might give way under temptation. Besides, it was extremely possible that Mrs. Ryland might interrogate her, and endeavour to extract what she knew with regard to Philip's late erratic courses; and she would not have given her worst shawl for Lilly's power of concealment, especially

when questioned by one she loved; even supposing her faith remained incorruptible.

Then, again, her conscience told her that she was neither a worthy nor a fit object for Philip to centre his hopes and affections in. She was much more aware of their incompatibility than he was; for he saw her through a glare that dazzled his eyes, reinforcing and sustaining his own delusion by Lilly's former enthusiastic commendations. In concealing their intimacy from his mother, he was not actuated by any doubt of May's merits, but of his mother's capacity to comprehend and appreciate them. Her limited knowledge of the world, fixed prejudices, and provincial ideas, would render it impossible that they could ever amalgamate. How this difficulty was to be overcome in the future, he could not pause to consider; being too much engrossed and infatuated with the present. But May, though captivated and engrossed too, was older and clearer sighted. She knew herself,

and she knew Philip—there was no difficulty in knowing him, for he "wore his heart upon his sleeve,"—and she was perfectly aware not only that Lilly loved him, and that he had, at the very least, been on the eve of loving her; but also that the ingenuous, pure, devoted, humble, true, and faithful girl, was a much more worthy partner for him, than she could ever be; and that if the *glamour* were once off his eyes, he would think so too. It was therefore quite natural that she should fear Lilly, and equally natural that, fearing her, she should hate her, and desire to get her out of her way. What was to happen afterwards, she could no more pause to consider, than Philip could. How he was to be brought to marry her without his mother's consent; or how, if that came to pass, she was to conform to the mode of life that awaited him, she deferred to investigate. They were both carried away by the stream of their passions; and whether an abyss or a sunny haven, perdition

or salvation, awaited them at the end of their course, they left it to the future to disclose.

In the mean time, Lilly, uncertain and irresolute, because not acting under an impulse, and too timid and inexperienced, and too much trammelled by her affections to form any deliberate plan for her own emancipation, hung on upon May still; though by a bond that she expected daily to see snapped. All that had rendered it dear was gone; all that had constituted her happiness within doors or without was ravished from her; her serfdom was no longer a joyous serfdom of the heart; yet, she toiled on as before; withholding no services, making no complaints. Now and then, May's good nature smote her, when she remarked the girl's patient sufferance; but the recollection of the mischief Lilly might do her if she chose, and of what a dangerous rival she would be if she were appreciated, hardened her heart. She feared the very virtues she was abusing; and the more clearly she per-

ceived their beauty, the more clearly she perceived that they must not be allowed to come between her and her desires.

It is true, that she did not at all underrate her own charms and fascinations; and that she really had a profound contempt for Lilly's personal attractions, unadorned as they were by any aids of ornament; but she knew that Philip *had* once thought her pretty; and if she were allowed to be much in his way, he might some day return to the same opinion; which she now believed she had persuaded him out of; by convincing him that there could be no beauty worth looking at without what she called *style* — a proposition which Philip had not had courage to gainsay; and to which, indeed, his admiration of May's factitious graces had made him half a convert. But, however, people's passions and vanities deceive themselves or others, truth is there at the bottom all the while; it is only suppressed and stifled, not extinguished; and every now

and then it flings out an unwelcome spark, throwing a very disagreeable glare into the secret places and tortuosities of the self-beguiling mind. Thus, in the midst of May's chimeras and delusions, she was sometimes suddenly pervaded by an intuitive and extremely unpleasant suspicion, that the beauty of the ingenuous, pure, and candid soul that looked out of Lilly's mild eyes might possibly exert a more enduring charm than the bright gleams that shot from hers; and that the delicate features and smooth young cheek, which had yet not attained its ripest bloom, comprised in reality a much more perfect ideal of female loveliness than her more brilliant and developed beauty. A glance in the mirror was always, for the moment, sufficient to banish these intrusive whisperings of the spirit of truth; but they were nevertheless sufficiently alarming, together with her other sources of apprehension, to satisfy her of the prudence of getting Lilly out of

her lover's way and her own, as soon as possible; and it was just when she was debating in her mind how this end could be best accomplished, that the devil—who we are told is always at our elbow watching his opportunity—seized the occasion to seduce her into an act of treacherous cruelty, that under any less potent influences than jealousy and fear she would have been incapable of. But fear is proverbially cruel; and jealousy, even to a good and generous nature, is the sorest of all temptations.

When Bet went home from Mrs. Knox's, and told her mother she was discharged, she omitted to mention the origin of the misfortune. She did not choose undeservedly to incur the suspicion of neglect or dishonesty, which she knew she did not merit, and to have avowed the truth would have been betraying May; for it was not to be expected that her mother would keep the secret. Hard working and willing, the poor girl tried to get some

employment, which should furnish her bread, and her two shillings a week, which sufficed to pay her parents' rent, and was all she had had before; and for a short time she jobbed about from place to place: but failing to obtain any thing permanent, the day came that the rent, which was always demanded weekly, was not forthcoming; and the poor family was threatened with expulsion, if the debt were not speedily discharged. Then Bet, who was passionately attached to her sickly infant brother, began to waver; she could not allow the child and his mother to be turned into the street; yet it would cost her a great deal of pain to do her benefactress so severe an injury, for she was fully able to appreciate the fatal consequences that would result to May from the discovery.

At length, having duly weighed the *pros* and *cons* after her own manner, that is, not taking into consideration the moral view of the case, but only the balance of evils, she

determined on the line of conduct which appeared to her the most advantageous; since, whilst it would probably restore her to favour, it might, at the same time, leave a loophole for May's escape. She accordingly presented herself before Mrs. Knox late one evening, when she knew the young people would have quitted work, and told her story.

On the following morning, after breakfast, Mrs. Knox took an early opportunity of taking May aside. "Have you ever had any suspicion of Miss Dawson's honesty?" said she.

"No," answered May; "I believe her to be quite honest."

"It is a very extraordinary thing!" continued Mrs. Knox; "but you remember about that white blond fall, that should have gone to Mrs. Wilmot's?"

"Yes," returned May, taking out her handkerchief, and violently blowing her nose, in order to account for the blood she felt rushing to her cheeks.

"Well, Betsy Barton has been here; she came last night, after you were gone, to tell me that she left that fall at your lodgings, with a bonnet of yours. She says that I put it into the wrong box. I don't think I did, by the by: and that when she went to your room you had not come in, but that she delivered them both to Miss Dawson. Did she take you a bonnet that night?"

"That night?" said May, pressing her hand on her brow, as if to summon her recollection; "she *may* have brought me a bonnet that night. I couldn't say she did not, because it must have been somewhere about that time I had my Tuscan cleaned and trimmed: still I don't think it was that week. But, to be sure, Bet may recollect the time better than I do."

"She says she is certain of it," returned Mrs. Knox, "but that she did not like to say so before, because Miss Dawson declared she knew nothing about the fall, and Bet was

afraid she shouldn't be believed. However, I can't say I think that a very good reason, and that makes me doubt the whole story."

"I think Bet must be mistaken in the night," said May.

"She has never shown any love of dress—quite the contrary," observed Mrs. Knox—"Miss Dawson, I mean. The fall could be of no use to her, unless she sold it."

"None!" answered May, whose brain was in such a whirl of uncertainty and confusion, that she could hardly command presence of mind enough to conceal it.

"And yet Bet declares she is positively certain of the fact, and that Miss Dawson must remember it; because, in taking out the bonnet, the paper the blond was in was caught by a pin, and when she lifted the bonnet the parcel fell on the carpet; and that she—that is Miss Dawson—picked it up and laid it on the table."

May remained silent, assuming an attitude

of reflection, but in reality unable to collect her thoughts at all. She saw, at once, that if she disputed Bet's assertion with respect to bringing her a bonnet that night, some of the other young people, on being appealed to, might be able to substantiate the fact; and then the mere circumstance of the denial might point suspicion to herself. If, on the contrary, she countenanced the accusation against Lilly, the girl might be put on her defences. At that very moment the blond was lying concealed at the bottom of one of her own boxes; she could not be certain that Lilly was ignorant of this, and a search would be fatal to herself. Altogether, she thought it better to hint that she thought Betsy Barton was either mistaken, or that she had invented this tale, in the hope of recovering her situation.

"With respect to my bonnet," she said, "it very likely came home that night—certainly it was about that time; but it is very

improbable that you should have put the fall in the wrong box. It is much more likely that Bet lost it; besides, why shouldn't she have said so when you asked her at first, before you questioned *us* about it at all?"

"There is one thing, however," observed Mrs. Knox, "that did strike me very much at the time, and that was Lilly Dawson's manner. I remember, indeed, I was so struck with it, that I was going to question her further, only that you remarked she had left work before the boxes went away. However, we'll have her in and question her at once;" and Mrs. Knox was about to open the door, for the purpose of calling Lilly.

"Stay," said May, seized with terror, "I think we had better say nothing about it to her till I have searched her drawers. If she has the lace, I shall find it; and if she has sold it, I shall find the money. If you will let me go home before her this evening, I may be able to discover something about it."

"Well, do," returned Mrs. Knox. "I dare say that will be the best way: and if you cannot make out anything, we will question her to-morrow."

Little dreaming of what was plotting against her, Lilly worked away; somewhat sorrowful, indeed, as she had been lately, from Philip's disloyalty and May's unkindness; but far happier than her brilliant rival. To the latter it was a fearful day—the most anxious she had ever passed in her life. She thought it would never be over, and that the hour of release would never arrive, when she might hasten home and thrust the cause of all this apprehension into the fire. There was no security for her now, but in burning the fall; and this she did the moment she reached her lodging. It was a moment of inexpressible relief to her when she saw the rich silk lace, the object of her eager desires, curling and crinkling in the flame.

So far, so good. But she was not out of

her troubles yet. On the following day, Lilly was to be interrogated; and that, even though she wished it, she would be unable to disguise the truth, May felt assured. Lilly, with her tell-tale complexion and simple honesty, would be the last person in the world to baffle a cross-examination. Willingly or unwillingly, she would tell all she knew, and that in a manner that would probably command belief. She felt, from experience, that what Lilly affirmed it was not easy to doubt; so that, by her expedient of deferring the examination and burning the evidence of her guilt, she had only gained the reprieve of a day. There was more to be done yet; and now, the imminence of her own danger hardening her heart, she began to repent that she had burnt the lace. If she had been less precipitate, she might have taken it to Mrs. Knox and declared that she had found it in Lilly's possession; but her foolish haste had undone her, and some further expedient must

be discovered for securing her own safety. After much deliberation, she could think but of one, and that was built on her knowledge of her friend's character.

"Lilly," said she, "come here; I want to speak to you." May was then sitting with her feet on the fender and her back to the light, which consisted of a single candle, standing upon a table in the middle of the room. Lilly had been working by it; but she now rose, and approached May. "Sit down," said the latter; and Lilly took a chair from the recess near the chimney, and, drawing it forward, seated herself just by the corner of the mantelpiece.

"Lilly," continued May, "I am in great trouble."

"Are you, May?" said Lilly. "What's the matter?"—"There's no money to pay the rent," thought she, knowing nothing of Mr. Cropley's twenty pounds.

"I dare say, Lilly, you think me altered

lately: I know I am; I'm altered to you and to everybody. The truth is, Lilly, I'm miserable!"

"It's something about Philip," thought Lilly.

"Do you remember," said May, "about six weeks ago, that there was a fuss in the work-room about a blond fall that was to have gone to Mrs. Wilmot's?"

"Yes," replied Lilly, who indeed recollected it too well; the circumstance had never been out of her head since; and it had occasioned her the greatest uneasiness. As we have before hinted, Lilly, having no theory of morals, had hitherto been governed and guided wholly by her instincts, which, being virtuous, had kept her so; but the standard by which she judged the conduct of other people was quite unfixed, and much too lenient, especially if she loved them. She had never properly estimated the amount of ill-treatment she had received from her cousins;

and she had never formed any just idea of the faults of May's character, although she was a constant victim to them. The selfishness, which had allowed her to live on Lilly's wages, and the dishonesty of prodigally spending money that she owed, had never been viewed in their true light: these were May's ways — ways which Lilly never thought of judging, till the amount of her own smart somewhat opened her eyes to their significance. She had not, comparatively, cared for her money, nor her labour, nor her self-denying meals— all these were sacrifices willingly made to her idol: it was not till May encroached on the domain of her affections, that Lilly began to judge her, and discerned that she cared for nobody's feelings but her own.

This discovery had given her great pain, every way; and by awakening her to certain reflections on May's character, it had prepared her to comprehend somewhat of the mystery connected with the blond fall; and many a

time since she had thought of the circumstance with wonder, grief, and dismay. May was not the angel she had imagined her; her idol was a false idol; that was plain. The others had been true ones: Abel had been good; the Rylands were good; for, in spite of Philip's defection, she thought no ill of him. She too highly appreciated the amount of May's fascinations, and too humbly esteemed herself, not to excuse him.

"Well," continued May, "that fall has cost me more unhappiness than I ever suffered in all my life put together before! I dare say, you little thought, Lilly, when Mrs. Knox was asking Bet about it, that I could have told her where it was?"

"I knew Bet had left it here," returned Lilly, with her usual directness.

"You did!" exclaimed May, affecting considerable surprise. "Then that was the reason you looked so confused, and blushed so, when Mrs. Knox asked you about it?"

"Yes," answered Lilly. "I didn't know what to say, when I saw you didn't speak."

"I wish, with all my heart, you had spoken!" returned May. "What a deal of misery it would have saved me! Indeed, Lilly, it was very wrong of you."

"I wish I had," said Lilly, innocently.

"You see, when I took it into my room, I had no thought of what it was: I supposed it was my old lace come home from the clear-starcher," continued May, "and just threw it into my drawer, without ever so much as looking at it; and never, till two or three weeks after, did I discover what it was!"

"Then you didn't know about it when Mrs. Knox asked us?" said Lilly.

"No," answered May; for although she had just before implied the contrary, that was a mistake: "no; it was just an accident that I opened the paper one Sunday, and there I saw it. I'm sure you might have knocked me down with a feather!"

"And have you told Mrs. Knox?" inquired Lilly.

"No," replied May; "how can I? How can I expect her to believe me? If I had only had the courage to tell her last week! if I had only told her yesterday! But now it's too late!"

"Why?" asked Lilly.

"Because there's a stir about it again. Bet wants to come back again; and Mrs. Knox has been questioning her; and if they only remember about my bonnet, it will be all up with me. How can I say I haven't got it, if I am asked! And then, what is worse, how can you say it? and you will be asked to-morrow, you may depend upon it."

"I hope not," said Lilly. "I shouldn't like to be asked about it at all. But, if I were you, I'd just go and tell Mrs. Knox that I'd got it. It wasn't your fault, you know."

But May's conscience would not let her

have done that, if she had had the fall still in her possession; however, she had now put it out of her power to do it, and so she told Lilly.

"I couldn't bear the sight of it," said she; "and, in my vexation, I threw it into the fire. But now, Lilly, you'll give me your word of honour you'll never tell."

"I'll never tell," answered Lilly. "I wouldn't for the world; but I wish you hadn't burnt it!"

"That's past praying for," said May. "But you won't betray me, even if Mrs. Knox questions you to-morrow?"

"I'll try not," replied Lilly; "but I know I shall colour up so!"

"Yes, you do colour so! That's the worst of it," returned May. "I'm sure, I can't tell what's to be done."

"I say, Lilly," said May, after a silence of some minutes, during which they both seemed to be cogitating on this unpleasant affair, "a thought strikes me. Suppose you were to stay

away from work to-morrow! I can say you've a bad cold, you know."

"But then she'll question me the next day, you know," objected Lilly.

"Perhaps not," said May, "if I tell her to-morrow that you know nothing about it, which I will. Probably, the whole thing may blow over in a day or two."

Lilly by no means thought the expedient a good one; she would have much preferred risking all on a full avowal and a restitution. However, the latter being out of the question, she acceded to May's proposal, and the next day stayed at home.

"Well, have you found out anything?" inquired Mrs. Knox. "Where is Miss Dawson?"

"At home," answered May, with a very grave countenance, and at the same moment placing some money, wrapped in a bit of white paper, in Mrs. Knox's hands. "The truth is, there is some mystery between her and Bet that I cannot make out. But there

is the price of the fall; and I should really take it as a favour if you would not press the thing further. That Lilly meant to be dishonest, I can't believe; but still there is something in the business I do not understand; but, however, whether it was an accident, or whatever it was, there's the money."

Mrs. Knox said it was very odd, and May agreed that it was; but, as she only spoke in innuendoes, she left the impression on Mrs. Knox's mind that she had designed, namely, that Lilly was, in some way, the guilty party; or, at least, if not a principal, an accessory to the misdemeanour, whatever it was.

Under these circumstances, she was not particularly desirous of having her back; nor was she at all surprised when May said, that she did not wish to return. On the other hand, Lilly was kept away without much difficulty. She had an intense dread of the impending interrogation; and, under all the circumstances of the case, would not have been at all sorry to leave Mrs. Knox, provided she

were certain of employment elsewhere. When, therefore, May came home on the second night, and told her that, as the season was over, all the extra hands were to be discharged, Lilly's chief regret was, that she did not know where to look for a situation. But this May promised to find for her, against she herself removed to her new lodging; at which time it had been previously arranged that they were to separate.

May, however, since the alarm about the fall, was much kinder than before. She was more like what she used to be, in the early days of their acquaintance. But Lilly's feelings were not the same. She would not have been compelled to injure May for the world; and would much rather have resigned her place than run the risk of it; but she could not forget that May had superseded her in Philip's affections; and, without stopping to examine whether the fault lay with him or with her, she felt that she could not love her as she had done.

In the mean time, however, they continued on good terms together, Lilly keeping much by herself—avoiding Philip and his mother—and seeing but little of May, who, after she left work, always walked out with her lover. Lilly knew it; because, when they came home, she more than once heard him bid her good night at the foot of the stairs. Lilly was sadly in her way; but, however, the day was fast approaching when she was to move, and then she should be rid of her, and anxiously she expected it; for, besides the inconvenience of her presence, which impeded Philip's visits, she could not overcome her jealous fears. What, if urged by her own jealousy, Lilly should ever be induced to tell Philip about the blond!

The dread of this haunted her, and left her no hope of peace, till she had removed Lilly out of the reach of temptation.

CHAPTER XVI.

LILLY AND MAY PART COMPANY.

In the mean time, May had done as she had promised, with regard to finding employment for Lilly, with a friend of her own. "It is only temporary," said she; "but, if you'll just take her for a few days, and give her her living, I should be obliged to you." She also promised Lilly that she would look for a lodging for her, and get her more permanently settled; and Lilly's heart was half melted with all this kindness. May, after all, *was* very good, and she reproached herself for not being able to love her as formerly; but, when she saw her come home of an evening, after walking with Philip, radiant with joy, and when she heard how he lingered below,

and what a long "good night" there was betwixt them, she felt that she could not.

As the time drew near that was to separate them, there was something about May that Lilly could not help observing, and which she attributed to a feeling of regret, and perhaps remorse, for some past unkindnesses. She seemed absent and depressed, and her conduct towards Lilly became capricious. When Lilly talked about the future, or made inquiries respecting her lodging, or expressed any apprehensions with regard to her chances of getting regular work, May always cut the conversation short; and any proposal of Lilly's to apply to Mrs. Knox for a recommendation was nipped at the onset. Yet, the variability of her demeanour was not calculated to inspire Lilly with confidence; and the latter was not without anxiety; but still, timid and irresolute, except when acting under an impulse, she waited on, from day to day, till the period for removal arrived.

"As I intend to move to-morrow, Lilly," said May, "I think you had better go to-night; and I have told the people to ex pectyou."

"Where is it? and what am I to pay?" inquired Lilly, alarmed and puzzled; for she was at present earning nothing but her board.

"Never mind," answered May; "I'll look to that till you are settled somewhere."

"How kind!" thought Lilly again; and she made an attempt to express her thanks. But May cut short what she had to say, by observing, that it was late, and she must be off to her work. Lilly also went to hers; and the day passed as usual, except that she had a very unexpected alarm in the course of it, from seeing a man, whom she believed to be her cousin Luke, passing the shop window. It was only his side face she caught; for he was looking in another direction; but she felt pretty sure it was he; and it naturally disturbed her exceedingly. She felt that she should be afraid to pass through the

streets, lest she should meet him; and, for the remainder of the afternoon, she avoided, as much as possible, showing herself in the front shop. When she went home at night it was dusk; but she had hardly courage to ring the bell when she reached the lodging—who could tell but he might be there waiting to clutch her—for she always felt as if he were a hawk, and she the poor partridge that he was stooping to seize. Luke, however, was not there; but she immediately communicated her alarm to May.

"I think it's very foolish of you to be so afraid of your cousin," said May. "Why should you be so afraid of a man that never did you any harm? He only wishes to marry you—and surely there's no harm in that."

"But I wouldn't marry him for the world!" said Lilly.

"But that's just a prejudice," returned May; "you know, Lilly, it's not easy for you to get your living by yourself, here in

London—you are not fit to live by yourself, and that's the truth. You've done well enough while you've been with me; but, for my part, I don't see how you're ever to get on alone; and I do think it would be the best thing in the world for you to marry your cousin—I do, indeed. Then, you'd have a comfortable home, and somebody to take care of you."

"I'd rather starve than marry him," answered Lilly, with unusual energy. "I can't think how you can wish me to marry a person I hate so!"

"Well," returned May, "you must choose for yourself—only, I think it would be the best thing that could happen to you; that I tell you."

It was very easy for May to say all this, who had got Philip for herself, and who did not know what sort of person Luke was; but Lilly did not like it at all. She would not have relished such advice from any body; but, from the person who had superseded her

in Philip's heart, it was bitter, indeed! And, although gentle-tempered almost to a fault, she could not help showing her dissatisfaction, by quitting the room.

It was about nine o'clock; and Lilly, having first indulged in a hearty fit of weeping, and since pinned up in a bundle the few articles of dress which formed her wardrobe, was endeavouring to persuade herself to return to May, and, forgetting her resentment, part in charity with one whom she had loved so dearly, and who had certainly done her many kind services, when her friend opened the door that divided the two rooms, and said, "Lilly, it's time to go!" Whereupon, Lilly rose, tied her bonnet-strings, put a pin in her shawl, and came out, with her bundle in her hand. She had had some idea of giving May a kiss, and thanking her for the home she had so long afforded her, before they descended the stairs; but she found that May was already half way down them; so she joined her

in silence, and in silence they proceeded along the street.

"Is it far?" inquired Lilly.

"Not very," answered May; "but I'm not sure that I shall find the way without taking a coach; it's so dark;" and indeed it was a thick, misty night; and, although it did not rain, the streets were so greasy and slippery with mud, that Lilly was by no means sorry when May called "Coach!" to a man who was standing beside his vehicle, which was drawn up close to the pavement, at the corner of St. Martin's Lane.

"Open the door!" said she; and the man obeying her, the two girls stepped in; Lilly first; and May following, after making some observation to the driver, who then mounted his box, where another person was already seated, and drove off.

Not a word was spoken inside the coach, as they rumbled through the dimly-lighted streets. What May felt Lilly could not tell;

but her own feeling was one of deep depression. The present was dark, and the future was dark; and she saw no ray of light to brighten the picture. She had never lived alone in her life, and she foresaw how dismal it would be; besides, her very means of subsistence were precarious. And then the void in her heart was so sad. Ever since her emancipation, and the awakening of her spirit, Lilly had lived upon love—but now she had no one to love—no one to serve—no one to sacrifice to. Poor Lilly! She was desolate without, and desolate within!

She was so occupied with these sad thoughts, that she did not know how long they had ridden, when the coach stopped, and the door was opened—that it was so, she rather heard than saw; for it was so exceedingly dark, that she could not even distinguish May, who sat opposite to her. "Go!" said the latter; and Lilly got out, assisted by the man, expecting May to follow; but, to her infinite

surprise, her feet were no sooner on the pavement, than she heard the steps folded up, the door smartly shut, and the coach driven away; whilst the man who had assisted her to alight, still holding her by the arm, and saying, "This way," led her into the dark passage of a house.

"Is this the lodging?" asked Lilly, both alarmed and grieved. She had expected May to accompany her to her apartment, and introduce her to the woman of the house; and she had, of course, also expected that she would bid her *good by*. Such a parting, and such a reception, quite confounded her; and, little suspicious of evil as she was, she began to fear that some was intended her.

"Come this way," said the man. "It's rather dark; but I'll lead you."

"Is it high up?" inquired Lilly.

"On the third story," answered the man.

It was very odd; but still he did not speak uncivilly. As for his face, she could not see it; perhaps there was no cause for alarm; it

was doubtless a poor neighbourhood, and a poor house; what better could she expect? Indeed, she had charged May to take for her but a single, low-priced room; and that the place should be ill-lighted, or not lighted at all, was not surprising. But how dull it would be! and how frightened she should be coming home at night from her work. All these things she thought, as they groped their way up-stairs, her conductor still holding her by the arm. When they reached the third story, he stopped.

"Is it here?" asked Lilly.

"All right!" said he, as he drew a key from his pocket, and opened a door. Lilly turned quickly towards him, but she could distinguish nothing.

"Is there a candle?" said she.

"You'll get one presently," he replied; and, before she was aware of his intention, he had pushed her into the room, locked the door upon her, and she heard his foot descending the stairs.

This action, conjoined to the words "*All right,*" were a revelation to her—she felt assured that she was entrapped—May had delivered her into the hands of her enemies! That expression, "*all right,*" was a slang one of Giles Lintock's; he used it on all occasions; it had struck familiarly on her ear the moment he uttered it! All was accounted for now: May's mystery—her vindication of Luke—the strange parting and stranger reception—all was clear; she was betrayed, and May was the traitor!—

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HISTORY OF A NIGHT.

The only light Lilly had, whereby to reconnoitre the place into which she had been so strangely thrust, was that which struggled through the dirty panes from the neighbouring windows. Exactly opposite, on the floor level with the room she was in, there was a lamp, which, though not sufficient to illuminate the narrow street below, did serve, in some degree, to dissipate the obscurity around her. It sufficed at least to show her that she was in a tolerably-sized square room, in one corner of which stood a four post bedstead, without curtains; that in the recess of one of the windows there stood a small table; and she could also discern two or three objects,

which appeared to be chairs placed against the wall.

This was all the room seemed to contain—but the bed!—was there anybody in that? What if Luke were there! Standing still on the spot whereon she found herself when the door was closed behind her, afraid to move either way, she listened; but no sound reached her, except the low buzz from the street, and the rolling of distant wheels. In this attitude she stood for upwards of a quarter of an hour, scarcely breathing, that she might hear the better; but all was so quiet, that she ventured at length to advance cautiously towards the bed, and, having listened till she was satisfied no breather was there, she put down her hand in order to ascertain if the bed was made. It was; and Lilly, whose trembling limbs could scarcely support her, seated herself on the edge that she might collect her thoughts.

That she was once more in the power of her

cousin, she did not doubt. For what reason, she could not divine, May had delivered her into "the snares of the fowler." It was a cruel thought—and as the conviction pressed on her, she could scarcely abide its bitterness. Poor Lilly had not believed in such a world —a world where what was fair could be so false.

Then she began to wonder what could be Luke's design in thus pursuing her. Why should he care for her so much as to give himself all this trouble—following her about the country, and employing Giles Lintock to entrap her? And how should he have known Giles? These were questions she found it impossible to answer. One thing, however, she was determined on, and that was, not to marry Luke. If he persisted in that scheme, she would do as Abel had advised her when first she met him; she would appeal to the clergyman, and tell him that she had never consented to the union, and that she would

rather die than be the wife of Luke. Thank God, Abel had given her this advice! At that time, it would have been of no use to her, for she could not have dared to follow it; but now, she knew better — at least, she was bolder; she knew a little more of the world, though she did not know much; and besides, she had had her first lesson in love; and although Philip would never think of her again, she could never forget him; and if Luke, instead of being an ogre, as she thought him, had been a man, still she would have sought protection from him; she never would marry, whether by force or favour; on that point she was clear.

Then, she wondered whether he would intrude on her that night; and she listened anxiously for every sound; but though she sometimes heard doors clapping below, no one seemed to ascend so high as where she was.

Thus she sat for a long time, till, besides being very tired, she began to feel very cold.

Every now and then, in spite of her fears, she found herself dozing; and, at length, she thought she would slip into the bed, without undressing, and cover herself up with the clothes. It did not appear that any body intended to disturb her that night, and she would be in no more danger in the bed than out of it; but she resolved not to sleep, if she could help it.

She found it no easy matter, however, to keep herself awake; she tried and tried, but slumber would steal over her; and after many abortive efforts against it, she at length sunk into sleep.

She thought she could not have been long asleep, when she was awakened by a noise close to her. Her sleep had probably not been very sound either, for there was no forgetfulness; and her consciousness of where she was, and of the preceding events, was as clear and vivid when she opened her eyes, as when she closed them; and with this flash of recollec-

tion came the conviction that she was no longer alone — there was somebody in the room—and the faint light showed her a figure seated at the bottom of the bed.

To those who have ever felt what it is to fancy, in the dead of night, that there is some unknown being in the room, which they believed untenanted by any but themselves, we need not attempt to paint the thrill of terror that instantly pervaded Lilly's every nerve, nor how breathlessly she listened to the movements of this midnight visitor.

The first distinct sound that reached her after she awoke, seemed to be a convulsive sigh or sob; then there was another and another; in short, the person was evidently weeping: and she was soon satisfied that the mourner was a woman, and that the grief was of no gentle character. However, the discovery of the sex of the stranger somewhat reassured her; and she lay still, listening and wondering what was to come next. Perhaps,

she had been put into a wrong room and the woman might be coming to bed; in which case there must necessarily ensue an explanation. Whilst debating whether to speak at once, or whether to wait the event in silence, she observed that this storm of grief was beginning to abate; there was a longer interval between the sobs; the breathing became more regular; the passion, in short, had apparently exhausted itself; and just as she was making up her mind to address her, the woman arose and quitted the room; closing the door, but not locking it.

Now, then, she might escape; at least, there was a fair chance that she might grope her way down stairs and reach the street; and she felt much disposed to try; but when the question occurred of what she was to do when there, she was at a loss to answer it. She did not know where she was, and would probably have great difficulty in finding her way to the part of the town known to her; and if

she did, of whom to claim protection or advice, she knew not. Her thoughts ever recurred to Philip; but, after this experience of May's treachery, her faith in human faith was shaken—Philip and May were one. Besides, she could not persuade herself that any body could shield her from her cousin; he seemed to be possessed of some mysterious right over her person, which his unscrupulous nature would, sooner or later, find means to vindicate. She resolved, however, when the morning arrived, that she would make an attempt to escape; leaving the direction of her flight to be decided by circumstances.

She was still lying cogitating on these matters, when she was startled by the creaking of the stairs; and in a moment her ears were on the alert, and her eyes straining to the door—and presently the latch was very gently, but audibly lifted, and the door was slowly opened—then there was a pause; and then it was opened a little further; and

some one entered the room, closing it very gently.

Lilly, at first, concluded that this was the woman returned, although the movements were certainly very different; for she had used no caution; whereas, this person seemed to be extremely fearful of disturbing her. A mother entering the room of her sick infant, on whose lids sat life and death, at issue, could not have moved more inaudibly. But as the figure advanced into the room and crossed the faint ray of light that still gleamed from the opposite window, where some low revellers of the night were congregated, she fancied that she could distinguish that this was the figure of a man. Be it what it might, however, it was moving towards the bed, and at length stood close beside her; and there it paused awhile. What mystery was this? Who was this midnight visitor, that trod with such a stealthy, noiseless foot, that she was satisfied he wore no shoes? Was it Luke? She

thought it was; and during that fearful pause, what memories crowded on her! What had become of Mr. Ryland? What of Winny Weston's lover? What was the signification of the scene in her dead uncle's chamber?

Whilst she asked herself these things, she perceived the figure stooping over her, bending gradually lower and lower, as if listening for her breath, which she endeavoured to the utmost to suppress; so that, apparently unable to ascertain by that means whether the bed were tenanted or not, a hand was gently laid upon the coverlet. This experiment seemed to satisfy the man, if man he were, and he immediately reassumed an erect position.

Then, there was another pause, during which Lilly, almost turned into stone with terror, lay as motionless as the dead, whilst there was some slight movement on the part of the man, which terminated in a faint sound, like the opening of a stiff clasp knife: the sound was familiar to her, because her cou-

sins had such instruments — strong knives, with horn handles, and two or three blades. Then she would have screamed; but she could not lift her voice; and at that instant she felt that something fell upon the bed: the man had dropped the knife; whereupon, he put down his hand to seek it; but it having fallen betwixt the folds of the coverlet, he could not find it. This Lilly understood from his actions; and apparently restrained from a more active search by the fear of awaking her, after a moment's hesitation, he turned about, and still with the same inaudible steps and cautious movements, he quitted the room.

The moment the door was closed, Lilly put out her hand and seized the knife, which, having fallen upon her, had slipped over to the inner side of the bed, which, by the way, we should have remarked, stood against the wall. She had not been mistaken: it was, as she had supposed, a large clasp knife, open. It was therefore plain that the man, whoever

he was, had come to murder her; and doubtless, having obtained another weapon, he would return and execute his design. This one, however, she immediately thrust under the mattress.

What should she do now? Where cry for help? Whither seek protection? Who was in the house she knew not; perhaps nobody but this man and the weeping woman—but could she aid her? Wherefore had she wept? Perhaps for the victim that she could not save—that she had, may be, come to warn, but dared not. There was the window, and the light in the opposite room—there were livers there—and, trembling like a leaf, she got out of bed and crept towards it: first, she must throw it up—that would make a noise, and might be observed by the man below, and ere she could make herself heard by the neighbours, he would come behind her, and seize her, and drag her to the bed, and kill her there; it might only summon him the quicker to her destruction.

Suddenly, another thought struck her—she might get the key, and lock the door from within; that is, if she durst but open it—but what if he were standing on the other side However, this seemed her only chance, as it would give her time to open the window and call for help; so she turned in that direction; but before she reached it, she became aware that a foot was again approaching; and impulse now taking the command, and deciding for her in an emergency that left no time for reflection, she instantly retreated and took refuge under the bed, the only place of concealment that, as far as she knew, the room afforded.

She had scarcely reached her refuge, when, as she expected, the door opened, and the man, as she supposed, entered, but with less precaution than before. The latch was lifted, and the door was closed audibly enough; and the step across the room was audible too, till it reached the side of the bed.

"Now," thought Lilly, "he will miss

me, and seek me; and he will find me, too, and I shall be dragged out and murdered." Her terror and agony were inexpressible. A space, however, of some six or seven minutes ensued — an age of anguish to her, when, to her surprise, she felt the bed shake above her; and it appeared that the person had stepped into it and lain down. How strange! Was this the man, or the woman, or some other visitor? She would have given any thing to know; but till they slept, at all events, that was impossible, without discovering herself, which she durst not risk doing; so, almost frozen with fear and cold, she remained quietly where she was, listening to the breathing of the person above her; which, very shortly, from the long drawn-out and heavy respirations, betokened that they slept.

And now Lilly debated what she should do next. If it were the man that was lying in the bed, she must either have mistaken his

intentions, or he must have changed them; but, in either case, she so much dreaded being discovered by him, that, painful as her situation was, she would prefer remaining in it till he quitted the room again, to the risk of betraying herself. If, on the contrary, it were the woman, the best thing she could do would probably be to make her acquainted with the circumstance, and seek her protection or advice. Then again, if she were sure it was the man, now that he was asleep—if she were but sure of that—she might possibly creep out of the room and lock him in. But, amongst these difficulties and uncertainties, wrought up to a fearful pitch of agitation and terror by so many strange circumstances, it was not easy for a timid, irresolute, inexperienced girl to decide; so there she lay still, doubting and fearing, till the opportunity for action was lost.

Heavily slept the sleeper upon the bed; with a panting heart and straining ears for

what should next ensue, watched Lilly under it; nor did she watch in vain; for now again the latch is gently stirred, and some one enters, slowly, softly as before. This was the man, she was sure; she recognised at once the difference betwixt his stealthy approach, courting concealment, and that of the woman, which sought none. He was, therefore, come back to murder her. Oh! the horror, the anguish of that conviction!

Silently and inaudibly as before, he advanced towards the bed. She rather *felt* than *heard* his foot; it was more the vibration of the floor than her ear that enabled her to count his steps. Now he is beside the bed—what will he do next?—ere he can do any thing, the woman wakes—he had placed his hand upon her face; and, whilst she seeks to put it away, she cries, "Who's there?"

There was no answer, but a sound betwixt a cry and a groan, for the breath seemed impeded, and the bed shook, as in a fearful

struggle—there were efforts to speak, or to scream, on the part of the woman—and muttered curses on the part of the man — and still the struggle continued; till, suddenly, there was a strange, gurgling sound, and then it ceased, and there was silence. Some minutes elapsed; and then the man quitted the room.

With all the terror inspired by this frightful drama, the successive acts of which she had witnessed, up to the climax of horror accomplished in the last, Lilly's senses never failed her. She was one of those women who do not faint, though, having little courage, she could not make very available the senses she retained. She comprehended perfectly the deed that had been done, and knew that on the bed above her there lay a human being dying or dead—probably slain in her stead, for she fully believed that it was for her throat the knife was intended. And she was not safe yet; for if the man should return with a light to look upon his work, he would discover

his mistake, and she would still be sacrificed. Impressed with this fear, she durst not stir from her concealment; but, frightful as her situation was, she resolved to remain there till the light began to dawn—provided, at least, he did not return, which she scarcely dared to hope.

Oh, what long hours they were, till the light gleamed through those dusky panes! Previously to the appearance of its blessed beams, there had been an interval of utter darkness; for the candle in the opposite window had been extinguished, and the songs and shouts of the revellers, as they turned into the street, had ascended to that chamber of death and fear: whilst the pale stars that had witnessed that deed of blood had long veiled their faces. But red in the mist now rose the majestic Sun, to look upon his daughter Earth, glaring, as if in wrath, as he peered into her secret heart, and, one by one, brought out to light her sins of darkness. And now

Lilly thought that she should make her effort to escape. But, oh, what an effort it was! She felt as if she would almost rather have died where she was, if they would leave her to die in quiet, than encounter it. But still it would be madness not to try; for she was sure now that Luke, if he caught her, would never rest till he had taken her life.

So, she softly crept out from the foot of the bed, and got upon her feet—she had resolved she would not turn her eyes towards the sight she knew was there; but there was a fascination in it—she felt she must take one look—and she did; and then she looked again, and again, and again; bending forwards to discern those ghastly features—for she recognised them—they were those of Charlotte Littenhaus!—

Luke had doubtless come to murder her; but, in her stead, had slain his sister!—

END OF VOL. II.

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